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Money and Finance in Central Europe during the Later Middle Ages

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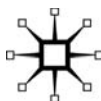
Money and Finance in Central Europe during the Later Middle Ages

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In memory of my parents

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Preface

Money is a topic of enduring importance. Nevertheless, the financial history of Central Europe during the Middle Ages has lain outside the mainstream of scholarly interest for a long time. The aim of this volume is to fill this gap by publishing contributions by Central European historians that were presented at the international conference 'Financial Aspects of the Medieval Economy', held at Charles University in Prague on 17–19 October 2013.

All of the chapters are based on primary sources. They focus on both the broader context of monetary and fiscal policy and the analysis of different types of accounting sources. The authors pay attention to technical questions relating to the ways in which accounting entries have been recorded; how taxes, loans, debts, credit and account books themselves have been organized. Further, they consider what light these accounts can shed on everyday life, including on the value of things and their exchange, prosopographical possibilities and what they reveal about habitual practices. The contributions draw on late medieval sources found in various archives in Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary. They allow us to investigate the institutions in which they originated, and to reconstruct the budget of a given originator or the supply of money in circulation. Nevertheless, working with a large number and variety of documents gives rise to considerable methodical problems. Some of the following chapters therefore also analyse the internal structure and genesis of accounts to demonstrate how such sources, which seem at first sight to be standardized and homogeneous, are in fact, much more diverse and problematic on closer examination.

The analysis of late medieval financial sources from Central Europe can help us to explain aspects of the economy and society at that time, as well as everyday life in the broadest sense of the word. It also contributes to debates on the structure of such records and the methods used by their creators. At the same time it can introduce these questions and materials to an English speaking community of historians and thus serve as a basis for comparison with financial conditions in Western Europe. This will allow a better understanding of how Central Europe can properly be incorporated into European history.

The volume is divided into four thematic parts preceded by a treatise on Central European historiography concerning medieval finance.

The first thematic part is concerned with money and minting. Hendrik Mäkeler highlights areas that were of importance for the imperial coinage of the 14th century, including a projected monetary policy that would have united the west and east European currency systems. At the same time he explains how innovations in monetary theory and in finance originated in and around the major mints in Central Europe. Michael North deals with 16th-century monetary reforms in the Holy Roman Empire. These have been traditionally regarded as a failure by monetary historians and numismatists, but his chapter clarifies the communication processes between the Imperial Estates (princes and cities) in Northern Germany and the reformers working on behalf of the emperor. In particular, the differing interests between princes and cities and their strategies to gain support on the Imperial Diet (Reichstag) is examined. Martin Štefánik then focuses on the economic situation of Kremnica (Kremnitz/Körmöcbánya), the main mining and minting town in the Kingdom of Hungary during the reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg (1387–1437). His analysis of the Kremnica town book of accounts from 1423 to 1424 makes it possible to explore the structure of regular tax incomes, terms of tax collections, financial reserves and various expenses of this mining town. The book of accounts also contains information about the changing values of silver and gold coins, an issue which was of great importance for currency conditions in the whole Kingdom of Hungary.

The second part consists of five chapters related to medieval court funding. Zdeněk Žalud examines the role of credit in the territorial policy of John the Blind, King of Bohemia (1313–1346). This extraordinary source of income allowed the king not just to expand the territory of the county of Luxembourg, but also to acquire Upper Lusatia and Silesia. The chapter also deals with the activities and personal careers of four main creditors of the king: Peter I of Rosenberg, Arnold of Arlon, Frenzlín Jacobi of Prague and Gisco (Gisilbert) of Reste. King Sigismund of Luxembourg frequently resorted to pledging royal properties and this policy is the subject of two chapters: Stanislav Bárta traces the situation in Bohemia and János Incze in Hungary. Their studies are based on the analysis of sums pledged in relation to the annual issues of the pledged property as well as to other duties that the recipients were expected to fulfil. They also pay close attention to the legal phrasing and political rhetoric of pledge deeds, the size of the financial sums paid by pledgees as well as their personal stories. The economic background and financial

policy of Queen Barbara of Cilli in Hungary (1406–1438) is analysed by Daniela Dvořáková. With reference to charter evidence, she deals with the way the queen's extensive possessions were administered, as well as her incomes and expenses, including her debts and shopping in foreign markets. By analysing two court accounts, Petr Kozák explores the economic background to the travels of Prince Sigismund Jagiellon (late 15th to early 16th centuries). He investigates how finances, services and information were distributed, as well as sheds light on Sigismund's remarkable mobility.

The third part tackles trade and towns and includes four studies; Pavla Slavíčková and Zdeněk Puchinger seek to establish a methodology for the study of early accounting history. They study the techniques and operating procedures found in the accounting records used in the town offices of Bohemia and Moravia before 1750. Their proposed methodology is based on the examination of accounting institutes (balance sheet, final accounts) and accounting record keeping (particularly principles of continuity, balance sheet and completeness of records) from the moment of their origin through their subsequent development. At the same time, the authors present the first results from their analysis of the accounting books of the City of Olomouc in comparison with sources from other town offices in Bohemia and Moravia. Financial conditions in late medieval Breslau (Wrocław), the capital of Silesia, are the subject of the study by Grzegorz Myśliwski. This chapter focuses on fragments from lost accounting books, based on the assessment and interpretation of some direct references to them as well as on their indirect reflections in other sources. The author tries to answer the question of how much they were used by Breslau merchants. He also considers wider trends in the development of the economic administration in the city, including the use of double-entry bookkeeping. Another important trade city of medieval Central Europe is at the centre of Beata Mozejko's exploration of the role that the rents owed by the city played in the financial relationship between Danzig (Gdańsk) and Casimir IV, King of Poland (1440–1492). Using this connection, she also examines the way in which Danzig's financial obligations were recorded and realized. The 1457–1458 thirtieth customs registers of Pressburg (Pozsony/Bratislava) represent one of the most studied and frequently debated sources for the economic history of Hungary during the Middle Ages. Balázs Nagy seeks to re-interpret this source from the viewpoint of an adverse balance of Hungarian trade.

The fourth part is focused on the role of money in the church. Antonín Kalous discusses the various ways by which the legations of papal legates

throughout the Middle Ages were financed. The chapter highlights the different sources of payments for cardinal legates and other types of legates and nuncios, varying from *procuratio canonica* to individual benefices and the central income of the papal chamber, and how these changed from the 11th to the 16th centuries. Although its findings are wide-ranging, its main attention is on legations in Central Europe. Marek Suchý deals with the economic aspects of the construction of St Vitus cathedral in Prague. This research is based on a thorough analysis of weekly building accounts dated back to 1372–1378. The chapter grapples with methodological questions such as what has been recorded in the accounts (and, equally importantly, what has been not recorded) and in what manner the entry was made. A comprehensive interpretation of the accounts, in combination with other written, archaeological and iconographical sources, allows Suchý to reconstruct the course of the building work week-by-week. The accounts also shed light on wider economic questions. They are an invaluable source of information on the price of building materials and the living standards of the craftsmen working on the building site. In this way the author tries to quantify the total expenses for various building activities in particular years. The final contribution analyses four accounting registers and two fragments of the Prague Metropolitan Chapter from 1358 to 1418, which have been quite unknown until now. The broad spectrum of data contained in this source allows Martina Maříková to study a variety of different aspects of everyday life in the church milieu. The chapter poses important questions concerning accounting methods, the material conditions of residential canons and the chapter economy shortly before the Hussite Revolution.

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I would like to pay tribute to a number of institutions and people who have helped to make this volume possible. It is the output of the international conference which would not have come into being without the generous financial support of my home Faculty of Humanities at Charles University in Prague and of the Centre for Medieval Studies, joint workplace of Charles University and the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, which provided lecture hall with all needed facilities. I am also immensely grateful to D'Maris Coffman, Tony K. Moore and Martin Allen for enforcement of their intent to publish conference papers within the Palgrave Studies in the History of Finance series and to the editorial team of Palgrave Macmillan, who showed the highest professional skill and flexibility in handling the project from start to finish. I would also like to offer heartfelt thanks to Tony K. Moore and Michael Goddard for language corrections, to František Kalenda for preparing the index as well as to all contributors for their valuable feedback on the ideas and evidence presented herein. My thanks are also due to the Gallery of the Central Bohemian Region for permission to reprint the late medieval Kutná Hora illumination on the cover of this volume. Last but not least, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my wife and my sister for their continuous support.

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Hendrik Mäkeler is the keeper of the Uppsala University Coin Cabinet, Sweden. His research interests include numismatics and monetary history, the history of economic thought, business and banking history. His PhD dissertation on the Imperial coinage in the later Middle Ages was published by Franz Steiner Verlag (2010).

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Introduction: Medieval Finance in Central European Historiography

Roman Zaoral

Theoretical concepts

The economic history in the first two decades after World War II belonged, without exaggeration, to the most dynamically developing branch of historiography, which is in stark contrast to the situation at the end of the 20th century. In particular two factors had influence on it: threat of the 1930s economic crisis, which forced scholars to the historical reflection of capitalism and the nature of its crises, and a massive penetration of Marxism into historiography in general. The works of Marxist historians produced the greatest responses and polemics. The question of the so-called first crisis of feudalism in the 14th and 15th centuries was one of the key topics. The point was to distinguish economic crises from depressions and to differentiate the crises that define feudalism from those that are typical for capitalism. In the context of these questions, the late-medieval crisis was perceived as more or less transitional, caused either by the limits of technical development in the feudal economy and by restricted investment possibilities (Rodney Hilton), by population growth (Michael Postan), or population decline (Wilhelm Abel), or by expansion of the money form of feudal rent (František Graus). A new impulse to this debate was introduced by Robert Brenner who adopted a critical attitude both to the demographic transition theory and the 'commercialization model' of capitalism's origins. Brenner considered class relations to be the relevant issue for the pre-capitalist economic development, namely the power of feudal lords to enforce payments that exceeded the amount of fixed rent (Růžička, 2014, pp. 155–158).

A true breakthrough in the Marxist economic historiography was the work of the Polish historian Witold Kula *Teoria ekonomiczna ustroju feudalnego. Próba modelu* (1962, in English 1976) which drew inspiration from

the Annales School. It is an idiosyncratic synthesis of serial history and Marxist theory enriched by Kula with his own perspective on the behaviour of economic participants. Kula examined structural changes and fluctuations within the boom-bust cycle in combination with emphasis on the contradictions of feudal system. He pointed to different starting institutional and social conditions of feudalism as against capitalism (the absence of free market and competition, the existence of non-market phenomena like serfdom and guilds), which forced economic participants to markedly different behaviour from that based on profit maximization and cost minimization. The peasant used the market in fact only because he received money for amortization of his obligations towards manorial lords. His "income" therefore did not preferentially depend on market conditions but on crop conditions. That is the reason for the specific logic of behaviour that reacts to price fluctuations in the market in a manner completely contrary to that which modern economics would assume: the peasant sells less during price growth and sells more during price decline. So the key factor in the peasant's decision is not the situation of the market itself but the necessity to provide sufficient cash for repayment of his obligations. Likewise, the economic behaviour of manorial lords did not follow the market but rather the maintenance of their own standard of living and social status (the 'negative market stimulation'). While a period of price growth in capitalism stimulates economic activities and mobilizes reserves, in feudalism it is, on the contrary, the decline of 'national income', mostly caused by non-economic factors (poor harvest, war), which functions as needed stimulation of economic activity.

Within the dynamic of the long-term (*longue durée*), Kula pointed out tendencies in the Polish economy which differ from the countries of early modern Europe. First of all, it is noteworthy that the improving conditions for foreign trade (particularly for corn export) did not affect the total structure of production and consumption in any clear way, no matter how they managed to generate considerable profits for manorial lords. The reason was the general orientation of the Polish aristocratic dominion, which was not focused outwardly on foreign markets but inwardly on the peasant, his unpaid work and the surplus from which it benefited. Moreover, this tendency to form isolated and autarchic dominions was accompanied by a specific economic strategy of owners which was supposed to provide that not only potential expenses but also peasant's potential monetary surpluses got back into the treasury of manorial lords. This way a specific form of closed monetary circle formed which Kula suitably describes as the economic *perpetuum mobile*.

The quantification of economic phenomena was the most used method of economic history in the 1950s and 1960s. One of the main initiators of quantitative method in Germany at that time, Wilhelm Abel, studied the development of price relations and wages which for him represented a key indicator of the state of economy. Price and wage fluctuations made it possible to determine the stages of economic growth and decline. The historians in Central Europe tried to create statistically specified price series, following the serial history of Ernest Labrousse. The differentiation of structural and booming phenomena in Kula's model was determined with respect to their potential reversible or accumulative character: reversible phenomena (cyclic price and wage fluctuation) were typical for the short-term, the accumulative phenomena of growth decided, on the contrary, on the long-term. From a methodological point of view, however, it was necessary to obtain homogeneous data (prices of certain products, incomes of concrete social groups) as far as possible to create a sufficiently representative series. However, this need and effort often met with a lack of sources for the medieval period in Central Europe.

In comparison with social and cultural history, the conceptual and theoretical impulses of economic anthropology got to the discourse of economic history only gradually and with considerable delay. Alternative views began to emerge only in the late 1990s and it is not without interest that the problem of debt, credit and the origin of money stood at the centre of their interest. The economic crisis of 2008 further deepened this focus.

Areas of research

In Poland the most important role on the institutional level was played by the Institute of the History of Material Culture in Warsaw. The study of economic history developed in Warsaw after 1956. At that time Polish historians made their first attempts at overcoming the monopoly of Marxism, being inspired by Max Weber, Henri Pirenne, Michael Postan and mainly by the Annales School, particularly thanks to close contacts with Fernand Braudel. In the 1960s the 'Polish historical school' has been established. It was represented by Marian Małowist and his disciples Benedykt Zientara, Henryk Samsonowicz, Aleksander Gieysztor, Antoni Mączak, Witold Kula, Elżbieta Kaczyńska and Maria Bogucka. Their texts were published on the pages of the Annales and the Journal of European Economic History. The dominant orientation on the 16th and 17th centuries was in accordance with the extant source base (Leszczyńska and Lisiecka, 2006, pp. 97–114).

Besides Kula's monograph on the feudal economic model, the theoretical works of Polish historians examined the roots of the economic growth of East-Central Europe during the late Middle Ages (Małowist, 1973a) and the origins of capitalism in Europe (Topolski, 1965). Małowist also tried to compare the social-economic structures in the East and the West of Europe in the 13th–16th centuries, placing emphasis on the unevenness of the economic development in different regions of Europe (Małowist 1973b, in English 2010).

Special attention was paid to the economic aspects of the late medieval crisis. The discussion concentrated on the agrarian and monetary crisis (Abel, 1966, 1978, 1980; Baum, 1976; Graus, 1951, 1955, 1963; Małowist, 1956). A part of the crisis debates in the 1960s was the polemic on the structure of feudal rent (Nový, 1961; Pach, 1966; Šimeček, 1971). The leading Czech historian, František Graus, returned to this topic again in his last major work (Graus, 1987). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a new generation of Czech and Polish historians questioned some views, referring to the small depreciation of Prague groschen and the uninterrupted development of long-distance trade during the Hussite wars (Čechura, 1987, 1994; Dygo, 1990).

The unifying component of total history (*histoire totale*) was emphasis on study of social history and quantitative phenomena, including prices and wages and tax burden. Most works on medieval prices and wages were published between the 1950s and 1970s. At that time they were intensively studied also in Germany (Abel, 1953, 1967; Ebeling-Irsigler, 1976–1977). In Czechoslovakia two commissions for history of prices and wages were established in Prague and Brno with the aim to publish data from the archival sources, mostly from the early modern period, in two special cyclostyled series (Materiály, 1960–1971, 12 issues; Ceny, mzdy a měna, 1962–1969, 21 issues). The basic overview of this research is given by Václav Husa and Josef Petrůň (Husa and Petrůň, 1962; Petrůň, 1973) and by Antoni Mączak (1995).

Of great importance was the 1949 dissertation of František Graus on paupers in Prague (Graus, 1949, in French 1961, in English 1964). It was a new topic at that time. Graus attempted to depict the paupers' economic conditions in pre-Hussite Prague through accounting sources and particularly town books keeping small debts and pawns. Thirteen years later, Bronisław Geremek, inspired by Graus, made research of the lowest town strata in 13th and 14th century Paris (Geremek, 1962, in French 1968). He used French methodological techniques and established the research of marginal groups (Geremek, 1987) and poverty (Geremek, 1994). Graus later dealt with this topic again and somewhat revised his original concept (Graus, 1987).

In the Hungarian historiography a heated response was provoked by a paper of Oszkar Paulinyi published in 1972. Its controversial subtitle *Gazdag föld – szegény ország* (Rich Land – Poor Country) constantly recurs in debates on this subject and became the title for a collection of Paulinyi's studies on mining history (Paulinyi, 2005). Paulinyi drew on the most-cited source of medieval Hungarian foreign trade, the 1457–1458 Pressburg thirtieth register, to determine that Hungarian foreign trade ran a deep deficit which could only be settled by the trade in money stemming from precious metal mining and minting the gold florin. His thesis inspired many other Hungarian historians, notably Elemér Mályusz (1986) and András Kubinyi (1992).

Overview of further themes

The presented bibliography is primarily focused on selected works of Czech, Slovak, Polish and Hungarian historians after 1945.

Mining:

Germany (Bartels, 2008; Bartels and Denzel, 2000; Bauer and Wolf, 1996; Smolnik, 2014; Stromer, 1981; Tenfelde, Bartels and Slotta, 2012).

Austria (Tremel, 1968).

Bohemia (Hrubý, 2011, 2014; Kořan, 1955; Majer, 1995, 2000, 2004).

Hungary (Draskóczy, 2009; Paulinyi, 1972, 1981, 2005; Štefánik, 2012).

Transylvania (Slotta, Wollmann and Dordea, 1999–2007).

Monetary history:

General (Kiersnowski, 1988).

Central Europe (Pauk, 2011, 2013).

Germany (Emmerig, 1993, 2007; Kamp, 2006; Kluge, 2005, 2006; Mäkeler, 2010; Schüttenhelm, 1987; Suhle, 1970).

Prussia (Paszkievicz, 2009).

Austria (Koch, 1983, 1989).

Bohemia (Boublík, 2006; Castelin, 1953, 1973; Emmerig, 2009; Irsigler, 2013; Kiersnowski, 1969; Leminger, 2003; Malý, 1960; Mezník, 1993, 1994; Nový, 1993; Vaniš, 1961; Zaoral, 2000a, b; Žemlička, 2014).

Silesia (Paszkievicz, 2000).

Poland (Suchodolski, 1971; Dygo, 1978, 1987).

Hungary (Budaj 2010; Draskóczy, 2004; Gedai, 1974, 1986; Gyöngyössy, 2012; Horák, 1965; Mályusz, 1985).

Long-distance trade and high finance:

Central Europe (Małowist, 1987).

Upper Germany (Denzel, 2009; Rothmann, 2010).

Regensburg (Eikenberg, 1976; Fischer, 2003).

Nuremberg (Stromer, 1966, 1970, 1975, 1976, 1978, 1981, 1985b).

Frankfurt (Rothmann, 1998).
 Wrocław (Myśliwski, 2009a, b, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2015).
 Cracow (Baczkowski, 2002).
 Prussia (Czaja, 1995, 2011).
 Mazovia (Samsonowicz and Lolo, 2008).
 Baltic (Dygo, 1991; Małowist, 1976; Samsonowicz, 1968).
 Bohemia (Čechura and Hlavačka, 1989; Dvořák, 2006, 2007; Graus, 1950, 1960; Janáček, 1973; Mezník, 1969, 1990; Polívka, 1994, 1999, 2012; Reichert 1987, 1994; Schenk, 1965, 1969; Zaoral 2011).
 Hungary (Arany, 2009, 2013; Fügedi, 1956; Halaga, 1967, 1978, 1983, 1986, 1989; Irsigler 2006; Kubinyi and Haller von Hallerstein, 1963/64; Kubinyi, 1992; Mályusz, 1986; Nagy, 1999, 2012; Pach, 1969, 1972, 1994; Paulinyi, 1972; Prajda, 2013; Štefánik, 2002, 2004a, b, 2011; Teke, 1975, 1979, 1995a, b).
 The Levant (Denzel, 2004; Małowist, 1985a; Pach, 1975).

Banking and bankers:

Denzel (2003), Draskóczy (1988), Kellenbenz (1982), Reichert (1987, 1994, 1996), Stromer (1966, 1970, 1974, 1976, 1985a), Vencovský et al. (1999), Weissen (2001, 2003, 2006).

Accounts and accounting:

Birgelen (2012), Borovský and Malaníková (2010), Boublík (2011), Castelin (1952), Čechura (1986, 1987a, b, 1988, 1993, 1998, 2004, 2012), Čechura and Ryantová (1992, 1998), Fouquet (1989), Fügedi (1960), Graus (1956), Heckmann and Kwiatkowski (2013), Hoffmann (2004), Irsigler (1987), Malý (1960), Mezník (1960, 1972), Nový (1960a, b, c, 1961a, b, 1971), Pelikán (1953), Polívka (1992, 1993, 2004), Suchý (2003, 2007), Šmahel (2005), Zaoral (2015), Zaoral (2015a, b).

Annuities, taxes, credit, loans and debts:

Baum (1976), Blechová (2015), Borovský, Chocholáč and Pumpř (2007), Boublík (2007), Čechura (1998), Czaja (1987), Dygo (1988, 2003), Fügedi (1980), Kučerovská (2012), Małowist (1981, 1985b, 2010b, c), Mályusz (1965), Mezník (1960, 1972), Mozejko (2004), Myśliwski (2008), Nový (1992), Pohl (2007), Štefánik (2013), Stromer (1982), Zaoral (2014).

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Part I

Money and Minting

1

A New Perspective on the Imperial Coinage

Hendrik Mäkeler

The significance of the imperial coinage in the 14th century is its approach to the inclusion of both Italian and French gold coinage. More specifically, the intention was to facilitate the clearing of Italian florin coinage, which was also minted in Bohemia and the German lands, and the French écu d'or. On a political level, this monetary policy reflects the intermediate positions of the German emperors between Bohemia and France, and they are significant for the life story of the German emperors of the period, who were raised at the Bohemian and the French court respectively.

The 'return to gold', as Robert S. Lopez adequately named the general development of the West European monetary systems at the beginning of the Late Middle Ages, provides also the general setting for the following story. In 1231, Emperor Frederick II had *augustales* minted in Messina and Brindisi, and, in 1252, Genoa and Florence reintroduced gold coins. This measure ended a long period during which silver coins prevailed in Western Europe. As the face value of any coin was based on its intrinsic value, this measure resulted in a multiplication of the money stock, and it facilitated economic growth that had been limited by the prevalent silver currency. Thus, 'the return to gold did more than provide symbols and tokens: it relieved the strain which economic growth was placing on a chronically inadequate currency'. (Lopez 1956, p. 219)

Despite rather limited gold deposits, even rulers in the German lands were attempting to mint gold coins. While several German gold coinages of the 14th century are well known and extensively published, the legal background of their emergence has been debated for more than a century. There are three different theories (Mäkeler 2010, p. 120ff):

- (i) Arnold Luschin von Ebengreuth held that the minting of gold, as opposed to the right to mint silver, was seen as a *jus regale*, a royal

- prerogative. As a consequence, it had to be conferred specifically, even to authorities that already possessed the minting privilege (Luschin von Ebengreuth 1926, p. 209).
- (ii) Walter Schwinkowski maintained that the opposite was true. According to him, there existed no legal concept concerning the minting of gold before the inception of gold coinage in the period of Emperor Louis the Bavarian and John the Blind (Schwinkowski 1910, p. 321).
 - (iii) Heinrich Troe in turn suggested that if the Golden Bull of 1356 specifically grants the right to mint gold to a group of princes, then the other princes do not possess this privilege (Troe 1937, p. 29, no. 2).

The most important argument for an understanding of the right to mint gold as a special right that is independent of the right to mint silver is therefore based on the Golden Bull, which, however, was not to be compiled until 1356. In consequence, it cannot act as a source for legal development during the reign of Louis the Bavarian. The relevance of the previous assertions on the matter seems doubtful. It is therefore necessary to take a survey of contemporary evidence that can shed light on this issue. There are privileges to mint gold for the cities of Speyer (1324), Frankfurt am Main (1339), and Lübeck (1340). Except for Lübeck, these privileges did not bring any gold coinage into being within the foreseeable future. While the majority of the cities, despite their privileges, were hesitant to enter into the business of running a gold mint, the opposite was true for the prince electors. The right to mint gold coins was only granted to the electors of Trier and Cologne in 1346, but Cologne had already issued gold coins prior to receiving the corresponding privilege. Hence, it becomes clear that the right to mint gold was not a *jus regale* during Louis the Bavarian's reign. Not before the reign of Charles IV did it become possible to establish an imperial prerogative to grant the right to produce gold coins (Mäkeler 2010, p. 121).

In order to overcome the complexity of gold coins that had different values and a multitude of issuers, an imperial gold coinage was established by Louis the Bavarian. Again, there are huge differences in the scientific reconstructions of the circumstances of the minting process. The problems mainly derive from different stories that are told in the written evidence. There are three different sources, and two divergent stories told (Mäkeler 2010, pp. 52–55):

Jean le Bel (c. 1290–1370) holds in his chronicle, which was compiled 1352–1361 and covers the period 1326–1361, that Edward III was granted

the right to mint gold coins at his election as imperial vicar. Soon after, he had écu d'or minted in Antwerp in the emperor's name.

Jean Froissart (1337–c. 1404) in his first chronicle (compiled c. 1360–1390 and covers 1325–1378) repeats Jean le Bel's information. However, the different versions of Froissart's chronicle omit ever more details that had been included in Jean le Bel's chronicle. At first sight therefore, Froissart's versions seem to tell a story that differs from Jean le Bel.

The third chronicler who provides information on the matter is Edmond de Dynter (1382–1449). His chronicle covers the period to 1442. According to de Dynter, Duke John III of Brabant was granted the right to mint gold coins in Antwerp. De Dynter even provides a detailed description of the design of the coins. They were supposed to be impressed with the imperial title and the emperor's coat of arms. De Dynter also mentions that Duke John had the coins minted by the mint master Falcon de Lampage from Pistoia.

The problem is that it is impossible to simply dismiss one of the different versions. While Jean le Bel was a contemporary witness of the coin production, de Dynter had served as a secretary of the dukes of Brabant since 1406. He can, therefore, be supposed to have been well informed about the history he wrote of in his chronicle. If, therefore, both Jean le Bel's and de Dynter's versions should be deemed trustworthy, quite an interesting picture emerges. As Marie-Luise Heckmann suggested, both King Edward III of England and John III of Brabant were elected imperial vicars, although Edward III was ranked higher. Therefore, it is possible that John III had the écu d'or minted in the name of Louis the Bavarian at the Brabant mint in Antwerp at the request of Edward III. Hence, the subsidies that Edward III paid to Louis the Bavarian were recoined into the écu d'or with the emperor's title in Antwerp. To some extent, this coinage could therefore be claimed as the earliest English gold coinage of the Late Middle Ages. In order to oversee the coinage, an Italian mint master was employed. The coins were minted in 1338–1351/55 (Mäkeler 2010, pp. 55–59).

The écu d'or minted in the emperor's name in Antwerp continued to be of some significance for the legal concept of the empire even later on. A royal letter of complaint survives but it was not recognised before. The letter reads as follows:

Consangwinee karissime, dilectionem tuam affectuose petimus et rogamus, quatenus scutas aureas seu aliam quamlibet monetam sub impressione ymaginis et expressione nominis quondam Ludewici de Bavaria, qui se imperatorem gessit, in terris tue iurisdictioni subiectis eidem peramplius fabricari non sinas.... (Kühn 1974–1983, p. 44)

From its content, it becomes obvious that the sender was Charles IV, who complained about the écu d'or that during his own reign were still being minted in the name of Louis of Bavaria. The letter was probably sent to either John III of Brabant or to his successor Wenceslaus I of Luxembourg and triggered a short-lived coinage in the name of Charles IV. These écu d'or were probably minted in his name in 1356–1357, before the city of Antwerp became part of Flanders. Therefore, it took no less than ten years before the change of the king (Charles was elected king in 1346) was acknowledged on the coins' inscriptions, which might be explained by the fact that they were minted in the emperor's name. Even so, it took at least a year after Charles had become emperor in 1355 to have the inscriptions on the écu d'or changed (Mäkeler 2010, pp. 132–135).

While Charles IV had écu d'or minted in his name in Antwerp, a florin coinage was also minted in his name in Bohemia (Mäkeler 2010, pp. 135–138). These two coinages even reflect the biography of the Luxemburg king: He was raised at the French court, but he was also the son of the Bohemian King John the Blind and his wife Elizabeth of the Přemyslid dynasty. This may explain why Charles attempted to establish a common European currency that would involve both the écu d'or and the florin.

Charles IV's plans are recorded in the *Collectarius perpetuarum formarum* which has largely been neglected by numismatic research. The *Collectarius* was compiled c. 1380 by John of Gelnhausen who served as a writer at Kutná Hora (Kuttenberg) and in the chancery of Bishop Jan IX ze Středy (Johannes von Neumarkt). John of Gelnhausen was thus well informed about monetary issues. Interestingly, the *Collectarius* even contains a text entitled “De moneta imperii”. It is not dated, but internal evidence proves that it was most likely written between 1365 and 1369. It provides detailed plans for the future development of the coinage in the empire. Two different kinds of gold coins were supposed to be minted: the heavier écu d'or, valued at 13 groats, and the lighter florin types, valued at 12 groschen. These gold coins were meant to feature the enthroned and crowned image of the emperor on the obverse and a *cross fleury* on the reverse. Additional to the gold coins, silver groats valued at twelve pennies were even planned. Although mentioning pennies, the *Collectarius* did not include any regulations for such petty coins (Mäkeler 2010, pp. 199–209).

Even though this text was compiled some ten years later than the Golden Bull of 1356, it might very well shed some light on Charles's original plans that foundered on the opposition of the electoral

princes. According to the Strasbourg messenger Claus von Grostein, however, these plans were valid when the diet of Nuremberg and Metz commenced in 1355. After long-term negotiations, it was instead ambiguously decreed in the Golden Bull of 1356 that the emperor had the right to coin in his lands. The phrasing allowed for two interpretations. It related either to Bohemia or to the German lands in general (Mäkeler 2010, pp. 191–198). While an outspoken imperial claim to control the gold coinage existed, there were only limited consequences of this claim in reality. Applying an imperial eagle as a detail in the image of some florin coinages may be interpreted as one such consequence (Mäkeler 2010, pp. 183–184).

The development of gold coinage was rather unsatisfactory from an imperial point of view. This is why the silver coinage became more and more important, starting with the so-called Sulzbach Heller legislation that was decreed by Charles IV immediately after the Nuremberg and Metz diet in 1356. The Sulzbach Heller legislation explicitly relates to the negotiations concerning the gold coinage, which had proved unsuccessful, and suggests regulating silver coinage instead. Along with the amount of silver content, even the image of the coins is clearly defined: A cross on the obverse and a hand in combination with a letter indicating the mint on the reverse. Since all mints that received the right to produce hellers were supposed to mint according to the regulation for Nuremberg, it was possible to control the silver coinage centrally. Henceforth, when the regulation for Nuremberg was changed, all the other heller mints had to follow suit (Mäkeler 2010, pp. 210–215).

It is quite fascinating to see the Emperor Charles IV being limited in practice to the regulation of nothing but the pettiest coins, while the lack of central power is reflected in the creation of regional monetary unions. These monetary unions produced the higher-value silver denominations, mainly groats, and the prevalent gold coinages. The heyday of monetary unions within the German lands was the period of Wenceslaus IV of Bohemia, whose efficient governance, which was no longer based on continuous travelling, earned him the nickname ‘the Idle’. However, three out of six monetary unions from that period had already been founded during the reign of Charles IV.

Possibly the most important regional monetary union was the one founded by the Rhenish elector princes in 1357, shortly after the failed attempt to create a common currency for the Empire. Within this union, the basic unit of account was supposed to be the florin. The elector princes were intending to guarantee their currencies within the borders of their bishoprics. However, the florin coinage gained momentum and

became the prime gold currency within the whole Empire (Mäkeler 2010, pp. 246–258).

Even the Hanseatic League founded a monetary union in 1373 to reorganize the monetary system of the northern part of the German lands, although the supposed area of circulation was limited to the cities. The standard unit of account was based on silver which indicates that the coinage was not intended for long-range trade with the southern part of Germany (Mäkeler 2010, pp. 258–263).

Four more monetary unions were founded in the late 14th century. The Rappenmünzbund (founded 1377), the Swabian monetary union (founded 1396) and the Lower-Saxonian monetary union (founded 1382) were all based on silver, the latter using ingots as its standard means of exchange (Mäkeler 2010, pp. 263–273). The last monetary unions during this period were founded in 1390. They are called the Franconian monetary unions. Quite unusually, they were supposed to conduct their monetary policy in the king's name – which marks a tentative comeback of imperial power in the field of monetary policy. (Mäkeler 2010, pp. 242–246).

To sum up, the 14th century brings about an accelerated development in the monetary system and its legal foundations within the German lands. Gold coinages are introduced and their regulation is gradually taking shape. Royal and imperial power is, however, in practice limited to the regulation of small silver coinage. As the production of small coinage was impeded by high production costs in relation to low face value, the production of such coinage was the least rewarding in an economic sense. As the coins were small and inconspicuous, they earned its producer hardly any symbolic capital. This is why the production of small change proved to be a big problem, as Thomas Sargent and François Velde aptly put it (Sargent and Velde 2002). The phenomenon that the emperors were unable to permanently secure any profitable coinage on a state level for themselves and had to fall back on small change is a symbol for the frustrated ambitions of Charles IV and Wenceslaus IV who wanted to transform the Empire into a more centrally governed territory.

This development, or rather this failure, also affected the accounting systems in Central Europe by leaving them inadequate and without coordination. However, it is to the historical merit of Charles IV that he tried to overcome the local and regional monetary systems and intended to create a system of coinages that were easily convertible with one another. It was the Bohemian wealth of gold and silver as well as French education that laid the ground for these great ambitions, which failed equally greatly.

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2

The Reception of Imperial Monetary Reforms in 16th-century Northern Germany

Michael North

For a long time, monetary historians and numismatists have evaluated the monetary reforms of the Holy Roman Empire negatively and thus supported the traditional Prussian-German view of the 'Alte Reich'. This paper will provide a different view and shed light on the communication between the Imperial Estates (princes and cities) in Northern Germany and the reformers working on behalf of the Emperor. Among other issues, the differing interests between princes and cities and their strategies to gain support on the Imperial Diet (*Reichstag*) will be examined. This paper will show that the monetary policy of the Holy Roman Empire and its institutions (such as Imperial Circles and Imperial Diets on coinage) contributed, at least, to short-term monetary stability in the northern parts of the Holy Roman Empire.

The 16th-century Holy Roman Empire was a federation of several hundred territories. It functioned as a co-operation between the Emperor and the Imperial Estates (*Reichstände*) represented at the Imperial Diet (*Reichstag*). Economic and monetary policy was structured on the Imperial and the territorial level, whereby the Imperial Diet and the Imperial Circles (*Reichskreise*) played a crucial role. This paper focuses on Imperial institutions, that is the institutions of the Holy Roman Empire, which have been largely neglected by economic historians, although they provided a vital institutional framework, along with trust and confidence. Imperial institutions included the Imperial Circles whose role should not be underestimated. They were supra-territorial, geographical sub-divisions of the Empire and responsible for the publication of Imperial laws, maintenance of the eternal peace declared in 1495 (*Ewiger Landfriede*), and defence. Moreover, they had supervisory competence in economic matters, taxation and minting (North, 2012a, b, pp. 164–170 and 349–350). Although minting was as territorially scattered as the

Empire itself, the Imperial Circles created stable currency zones in the North and South of Germany. As already noted, traditionally the monetary reforms of the Holy Roman Empire have been regarded by monetary historians and numismatists as a failure (North, 2009, pp. 81–83; Schneider, 1995, pp. 336–338). This study will elucidate the communication processes between the Imperial Estates in Northern Germany and the reformers working on behalf of the Emperor. In particular, it will examine the differing interests within the princes and cities that comprised the Imperial Estates and the strategies they employed to gain support in the Imperial Diet.

In the second half of the 16th century, the debates over implementing the imperial decree on coinage (*Reichsmünzordnung*) were most intensive in the Upper Saxon and Lower Saxon Circle, shown in Figure 1. Up to now, research has ignored or has not recognised this point adequately. The two ‘circle histories’ (*Kreisgeschichten*) by Udo Gittel (1996) and Thomas Nicklas (2002) deal with coins only marginally and furthermore foster old legends. In the same way as the Empire and the Hanseatic League were for a long time considered to be obsolete models, it has generally been assumed that imperial decrees on coinage were failures. By examining the communication between the Circles and the Empire as well as the practice of coining in the territories, however, a more nuanced picture can – and has to be – drawn (North, 2006). Communication took place in multiple ways: Circle Diets and Imperial Diets on coinage (*Reichsmünztage*) were often more important for the different Imperial Estates than the Imperial Diets themselves. Since the Diet at Worms in 1545, a debate over a new imperial decree on coinage had been in progress. This debate dominated Imperial Diets, in this case Imperial Diets on coinage, as well as Circle Diets and Probation Diets (*Probationstage*) for the following decades. The topics discussed were the introduction of a new imperial heavy silver coin (*Reichs(grob)münze*), the provision of low denomination coins (small change) and the import as well as export of foreign and domestic coins. The Diet at Worms initially sought the expertise of the silver mining territories (*Münzstände*), their views were summarised in a recommendation of the coinage committee and finally resulted in an interim decree on coinage (Aulinger, 2003, pp. 872–978, nos. 66–89). Because coinage was always a matter of profit and bargaining (sometimes also a losing bargain), different interests clashed. Moreover, these interests had to take account of wider economic factors since no other commodity flows as fast as coins. While the towns appealed to the common good of the Empire, the mine operators whose resources were gradually decreasing prioritised their own situation. In



Figure 2.1 The Lower (grey) and Upper (black) Saxon Imperial Circles

contrast, the Emperor and the coinage committee sought to balance these interests and to initiate steps towards standardisation (Aulinger, 2003, pp. 961–978, nos. 87–89). These controversies were reflected in competing communication structures at the level of the Circles.

Regarding the reception of the imperial decree on coinage, it makes sense to look at individual Imperial Circles. Thus, the reception of the reforms in the Upper Saxon Circle will be dealt with first on the basis of the Pomeranian minting policies (Krüger, 2006, pp. 42–44, 53–56), and then the Lower Saxon Circle will be addressed. The example of Pomerania shows that even smaller coinage estates could achieve something by attending Imperial Diets on coinage, while a major coin producing territory like Saxony, whose voice would be heard at an Imperial Diet in any case, did not even have to attend. A crucial issue for the Pomeranians was the country's supply of coins of small face value – the Pomeranian copper pfennig (*Kupferpfennig*). Thus they sought to ensure that this kind of coin was not banned like other small coins in the Empire, such as the Frankish heller had been. By attending the Imperial Diets on coinage at Speyer in 1549 and Nuremberg in 1551, Jacob von Zitzewitz und Johannes Scharmer were able to secure the official recognition of

the pfennig. Several steps were taken to achieve this aim. A letter from Duke Philipp I of Pomerania-Wolgast to the Emperor, of which a draft has been preserved, warned of the negative consequences that would result from banning the pfennig in Pomerania. In addition, Jacob von Zitzewitz authored several memoranda that were handed over, possibly as early as the Diet in Speyer but certainly by the time of the Diet in Nuremberg. They found their way into the imperial decree on coinage of 1551. Therein the Pomeranian pfennig were declared as the legal local coins alongside the Mecklenburgian, the latter falling under the authority of the Lower Saxon Circle.

There was no representative from the Lower Saxon Circle present at the Diets in Speyer and Nuremberg, nor did the copy of the decree on coinage addressed to the Lower Saxon Circle reach its addressee – the chapter of Magdeburg. By accident, the chancellery of Vienna had sent it to the Archbishop of Bremen. Instead agreements, initiated by Duke Heinrich the Younger of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, were sought at a regional level (Bahrfield, 1927, vol. 1, pp. 41–87, nos. 39–92). In 1558 the dukes of Mecklenburg had planned to unite with the Pomeranians and the Hanse towns in a currency union but the Wendish towns of the Hanse (Lübeck, Hamburg, Lüneburg and Wismar) saw no reason to abandon the Wendish Currency Union (*Wendischer Münzverein*) based on the Lübian mark (*Lübische Mark*) and the Mecklenburgian initiative failed (Jessen, 1968; North, 1990). Nevertheless in the draft of the decree on coinage of 1558 there were references to the topical discussion on imperial coinage. Obstruction (*Verhinderung*) of the imperial decree on coinage and its adjournment from meeting to meeting were said to be the cause of this initiative. The agreement on coinage between the mentioned estates was supposed to be a temporary measure, ‘until an unanimous compromise in the Holy Roman Empire could be achieved’ (Bahrfield, 1927, vol. 1, p. 215, no. 289).

The discussion, however, took place against the background of the Imperial Diet on coinage in Speyer 1557 – where there was also another Pomeranian memorandum, restating their concerns about the coinage of small change (Schroetter, 1912, pp. 47–80) – and the imperial decree on coinage in 1559 (Leeb, 1999, pp. 1953–1988, no. 804). This decree created a new imperial coin in the form of a silver guilder (*Silbergulden*) and beyond that, different kinds of coins, which were to be minted in the Empire alone. In the Circles, officials (*Münzwardeine*) were to be elected to control the circulating money as well as the mints. Probation Diets on coinage (*Münzprobationstage*) analysed the defects of the coinage at Circle level and were supposed to discuss measures against

such defects and to remedy them. The implementation of the imperial decree on coinage encountered resistance, which was expressed in a 'compunction' (*Bedenken*) to the Emperor in 1561 (Bahrfield, 1927, vol. 1, pp. 267–282, nos. 336–339). Since they did not immediately receive a reply, the Wendish towns resolved their issues on coinage amongst themselves, 'because they [the negotiations] were to be adjourned to the next imperial decree and therefore on the list for a long time' (Bahrfield, 1927, pp. 267–282). When the Emperor's answer arrived, it confirmed the introduction of the imperial decree on coinage in the hereditary lands (*Erblände*). Concerning the 'compunction' on coinage, it remained 'somewhat obscure' (Bahrfield, 1927, p. 290, no. 351). In 1564, the Emperor demanded the strict enforcement of the decree on coinage in the Lower Saxon Circle. The following Circle Diet, nonetheless, agreed to wait upon the upcoming imperial decree.

In 1566, the final imperial decree of Augsburg (*Reichsabschied*) revised the imperial decree on coinage of 1559 and marked the turning point in the organization of coinage in the Lower and Upper Saxon Circle. By readmitting the old Imperial thaler (*Reichstaler*) – which had been banned in favour of the silver guilder – the acceptance of the new decree on coinage grew in both Circles, and formed the basis for decrees on coinage in both Circles in 1568 and 1571 (Gittel, 1996, pp. 302–303).

The Circle Diet of the Lower Saxon Circle approved the decree of Augsburg in 1568 and commanded all Circle Estates to observe the decree. Two local officials were appointed to supervise the mints and to give an account of the coinage at the Diets on coinage twice a year. As with all decrees on coinage, the regulations included net weight and fineness, lists of approved coins, regulations for converting prohibited coins into approved ones and the coinage of small nominal value. Even though the Hanse towns delayed and unsuccessfully tried to maintain their special position, the Lower Saxon Circle was one of the first Circles to implement the Augsburgian decree, as it earlier had implemented the Imperial decree on coinage of 1559. According to the new Imperial decree of Speyer in 1571, the number of mints was reduced to four (Brunswick, Lübeck, Magdeburg and Bremen); in 1572 Hamburg and Rostock were added as important centres for maritime trade. The local mints of silver mining territories continued to be tolerated.

Turning to the Upper Saxon Circle, in 1570, the Imperial Diet of Speyer found it necessary to adopt the Imperial decree on coinage (Lanzinner, 1988, pp. 1242–1250, nos. 120–151; see also Lanzinner, 1993, pp. 381–393). The mint estates of, for example, Pomerania, however, had acted within the framework of the Imperial decree on coinage because of

their privilege to coin copper. Saxony, in contrast, continued to act on the basis of the Imperial decree on coinage of 1559 and 1566. At the Circle Diet of Jüterbog in 1571, it was decided to summon a Probation Diet in Leipzig for the same year. It is interesting again to follow the approach taken by the Pomeranians – representatives of both Pomerania-Wolgast and Pomerania-Stettin were present. All in all, Pomerania proposed the following three demands:

1. Stettin was to become one of the Circle mints unconditionally.
2. The copper pfennig was to remain legal tender as the official regional coin, although it had been banned in Speyer.
3. The ban on the importation and exportation of coins, also enacted in Speyer, was supposed to be weakened or to be enforced pragmatically.

Concerning the last question, Johann Friedrich of Pomerania-Stettin gave orders to alert his representative that it was impossible to avoid an influx of foreign money into the country due to the Baltic trade and its location and, therefore, foreign coins had to be accepted. The Pomeranian arguments were heard as well as those of Brandenburg. It was declared that merchants were allowed to bring and keep foreign coins but they were not permitted to spend them within the Empire. Because of their co-operation, probably also acting with Brandenburg, the Pomeranian representatives were granted that Circle mints would be located at Stettin, as well as Berlin and Leipzig, despite the fact that Stettin – and also Berlin – did not fulfil the requirement for precious metal storage as stated in the Imperial decree on coinage. A mint for the silver-producing Mansfeld County, in contrast, was not permitted and Mansfeld's mint in Hettstedt was torn down. The Ernestine duchies succeed in having their mint at Saalfeld promoted to become a Circle mint. The Pomeranians failed only to secure their second demand, to be able to continue coining copper (Krüger, 2006, pp. 53–57).

There were several reasons for the fact that the Pomeranians did not immediately make use of their privilege to establish a mint in Stettin, although these are not, as often claimed, to be found in mistakes or the failure of the Imperial decree on coinage. The crash of the banking house Loitz and the death of the Polish King Sigismund II in August 1572 meant that a Pomeranian loan of over 100,000 Imperial thalers to the Polish Crown had to be written off and this drove the Pomeranians into bankruptcy. In 1575, the Pomeranian Dukes, finally, obtained an imperial privilege allowing them to coin copper pfennig, which was then confirmed at

the Circle level in 1577. In 1580, the minting of silver was finally started and did not give rise to problems with the Imperial decree on coinage or conflicts within the Upper Saxon Circle. The minting of silver coins, though, was in terms of mint output of only minor importance in the duchies of Pomerania-Wolgast and Pomerania-Stettin – it ranked last in the Circle. This might explain the unproblematic situation (Kruger, 2006, pp. 60, 63, 282–283). Activities in the field of coinage at Circle level appear to have declined considerably in the 1580s and 1590s, in the same way as imperial measures on the same topic. Nonetheless, they were later confronted with the problem of an influx of foreign coins, the export of imperial coins and the increase of small money. But these were fundamental problems with the late medieval and early modern monetary situation that could not be overcome at an administrative level.

The first to acknowledge this reality were the Hanse towns. In 1577, Lübeck pointed out in a letter to the town diet that money had to flow in and out in order to trade:

The same chance brought to me a score of grain and other commodities from the Polish realm, from Prussia, Livonia and other realms and countries, item salt from France not only for the livelihood and nourishment of the neighbouring principedom, country and town, but for the whole of Germany's need, which have to be paid with ready cash similarly to other commodities, such as wax, tallow, flax, skins, hemp besides those goods are useful and necessary for the body's livelihood and whose lack could not be born in the Holy Empire and in the mines, and which are imported from Russia and other remote places. (cited after Bahrfeldt, 1928, vol. 2: 1569–1578, p. 474; North, 2006, pp. 221–236)

Lübeck thus advanced a similar argument to that of Thomas Munn a century later. Munn, in his posthumously published treatise 'England's Treasure by Forraign Trade, Or, The Balance of our Forraign Trade is the Rule of our Treasure', defended the English export of money, especially to Asia for imported goods, against political attempts to regulate money flows. By 1579 at the latest, Hamburg and Lübeck had decided to take monetary measures, such as establishing exchange rates between foreign gold coins and the Imperial thaler. The Lower Saxon Circle, by contrast, ignored the problem. The two Hanse towns explained their policy to the Circle as well as to the Emperor Rudolf II, to whom the Circle had appealed against them. The exchange of more than 20 notes (1580–81) concerning this issue gives us information on the communication structure in the field of coinage, as shown in Figure 2.

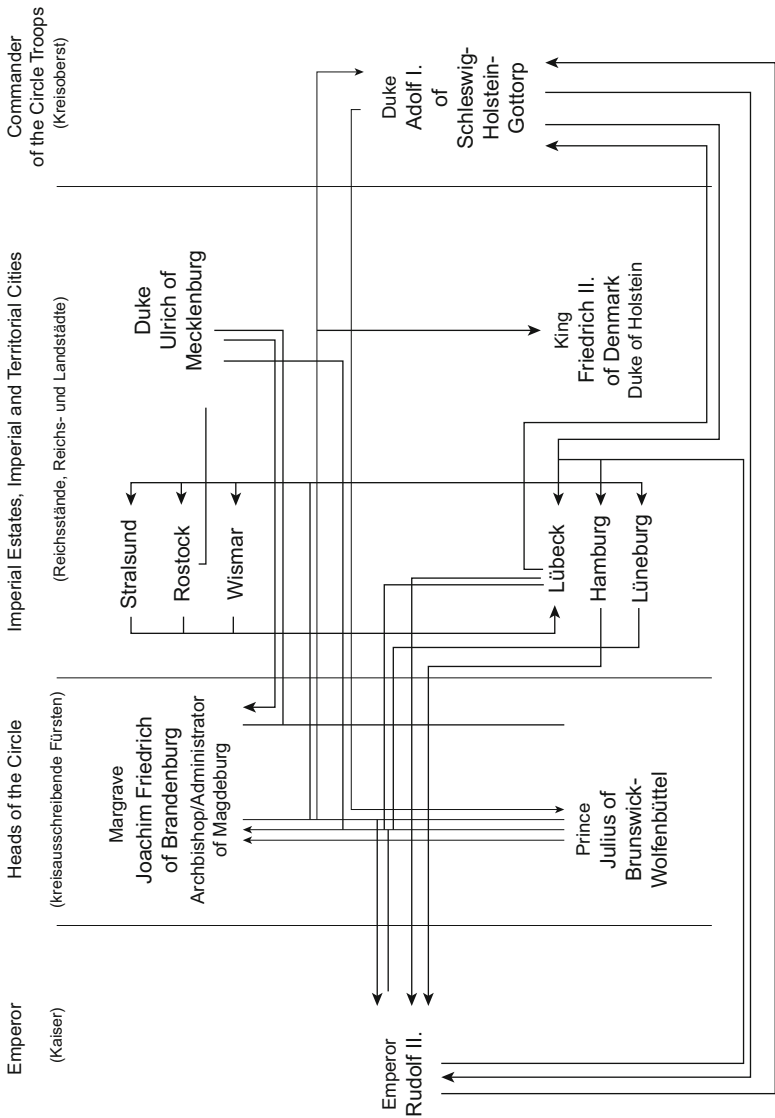


Figure 2.2 Communication structures of the Lower Saxon Imperial Circle for 'Monetary Issues', 1579-1581
Source: Draft by Dr. Robert Riemer (Greifswald).

The arguments stated within this correspondence cannot be separated from the structures of communication. Thus, the action of the towns had probably achieved a greater effect than the protests of the Circle Estates. The towns were right to point out the passivity of the Circle in response to the changing international political situation, which forced them to act quickly on behalf of the Emperor and the Imperial decree on coinage. Not only was the Dutch revolt addressed, by which the Hanse towns were directly affected due to their trade connections and their export of silver coins to the Netherlands, but Lübeck also skilfully connected the coin issue with another point of discussion between the Hanse towns, the Emperor, the Imperial Estates and the Imperial Diet, namely the monopoly-like trade of the English Merchant Adventurers on the territory of the Empire, particularly their new establishment in Emden (1580 März 18. Lübeck an die kreisauschreibenden Fürsten. Antwort auf den Brief vom Jan. 21 (No. 63), Bahrfeldt, *Münzarchiv*, 1929, vol. 3, p. 53 and pp. 48–70).

Conclusion

Although the lengthy negotiations on the Imperial and the local level about coins, mints and exchange rates may look clumsy and strange to modern economists, they were crucial for the institutional reform of the Holy Roman Empire. They ensured the functioning of the Holy Roman Empire in economic matters and generated trust. Despite temporary monetary crises during times of war the Imperial Circles guaranteed monetary stability in the Empire.

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3

The Kremnica Town Book of Accounts: The Economy of a Mining and Mint Town in the Kingdom of Hungary

Martin Štefánik

3.1 The town office of Kremnica

The town of Kremnica was founded by the merger of several smaller existing mining settlements, which were organized around the economic centre in Cremnychbana. Legally, the foundation date of the town is 17 November 1328, when King Robert granted it basic privileges including the privilege to expand its urban territory within a radius of two miles and the privileges of selfgovernance and judicial selfgovernment through the election of a mayor and twelve members of the town council known as aldermen (*Geschworene*, in German) (Juck, 1984, pp. 115–116, no. 136: 17 November 1328).¹ Due to the extremely rich and profitable gold deposits there, a mining and mint chamber was established in Kremnica (and not in the nearby older and more traditional town of Banská Štiavnica). This fact indeed suggests the vital importance of the newly founded town. Kremnica's gold production soon found its way onto the world markets in Italy, and to some extent, it affected the supply of precious metals and thus their European prices in the 14th century. At the same time it participated in the economic development of major business centres in late medieval Europe (Štefánik, 2011–2012, pp. 22–28). In the first century of its existence, the town grew at an unprecedented rate and became the head of the union of six and, after the accession of Banská Belá in the 15th century, of seven mining towns in Central Slovakia: Kremnica (German Kremnitz); Banská Štiavnica (Schemnitz); Banská Bystrica (Neusohl); Lubietová (Libethen); Nová

Baňa (Königsberg); Pukanec (Pukkantz); Banská Belá (Dilln) (Bolerázsky and Vozár, 1965, pp. 93–94; Štefánik and Lukačka, 2010, pp. 220, 228 note 199).

From the earliest years of its existence, the town administration had tracked the rapid development of the town and its mining operations. The town archives of Kremnica are the best preserved and the richest in documents among the seven mining towns for the Anjou and Sigismund period. The very first preserved document – an agreement between the entrepreneur Stephanus Marsili, originally from Florence, and a certain Jeclin of Olf (Saxony) before the Kremnica Chamber Count Leopold and Kremnica Town Council in 1331 – contains valuable information on the individual mining and metallurgical facilities of the time (Štefánik, 2012, pp. 107–109). A number of preserved documents of the Kremnica office from the Anjou and Sigismund period relate to purchases and sales or inheritance matters in relation to mining and real estate. The first mention of a town management book dates from 1407.²

This book was burned in 1425, as a result of a complicated legal dispute, which will be discussed further. In the book that was created to replace the original, one may read that at that time the town kept several books and registers.³ Of these, the only book of accounts that survives today contains data on the current management and exceptional costs associated with the events in the town's history.

3.2 The general characteristics of the book of accounts

The book of accounts is kept in Kremnica's archive under the reference number MMKr I.32.1a. It consists of 32 pages, of which 17 are handwritten pages, and contains two inserts. When closed, it has a narrow rectangular shape with the dimensions 12 x 31 cm.

The contents of the book include closed and current income and expenses, debts that the town owed to other entities and debts owed by other entities or persons to the town, as well as loans to the king and specific taxes listed on the occasion of his visit.

The individual items are arranged in certain 'factual' groups (charges to each town official, balances, debts, income and expenses) and, within each group, consecutively in paragraphs. The order is not strict, so the groups are occasionally intermixed. In rare cases, the reasons for these entries are specifically described: mostly for the older debts, which were then carried over to the totals. They are often only briefly described by the term 'due to his older debt' or the like. This reflects the fact that the town carried accounts with the same persons from whom, at the

same time, the town borrowed money and who were also responsible for levying taxes, performing representative and administrative tasks in the interest of the town and the supervision of the budget. These were members of the Town Council, the mayor and aldermen or, in some cases, the town notary. These same people then surveyed and approved the final accounts: the book lists the relevant names on its page 16. It is therefore understandable that the older debts in closing accounts were not specified and were only briefly mentioned, as they were known to the small circle of interested persons. Among them, only the notary (*notarius civitatis*, *Stadtschreiber*) was a paid town employee: the members of Town Council and the mayor were annually elected but unpaid positions.

Thus, the mayor, the twelve members of the Town Council and the notary fully controlled the financial affairs of the mining and mint town of Kremnica. They were of the highest status, the most honoured and richest burghers who made decisions and carried out tasks in accordance with their own interests as the prosperity of the town as a whole was closely connected to their prosperity as private individuals. The high level of autonomy in local government was guaranteed by the monarch who, in return (as will be seen in the analysis of accounting itself), was provided with substantial financial sums by the town. In practice, the collection of town taxes and the expenditure of the funds thus acquired were jointly controlled by the twelve members of the Town Council, the mayor and the notary during each weekly session and when approving the final account at the end of each year.

3.3 The language of the book of accounts

Until 1423, the only documented language used in the Kremnica town office was Latin. The book of accounts analysed here is the earliest surviving document with mixed records in both Latin and German. Such bilingualism may also be assumed for the earlier period, because, for example, in the town book of nearby Banská Štiavnica or the firedamaged town of Banská Bystrica, this practice already existed in the 14th century (Štefánik, 2004, pp. 306–307). Unlike Banská Bystrica, where the same content is repeated in both languages, in the Kremnica town book of accounts both languages alternate without any apparent rule or a binding language for certain types of content. Conventional formulas, such as dates and totals given in words rather than numerals, are always in Latin. The proportion of both languages is balanced overall, that is to say about half each.

3.4 The currencies used

The currencies used in the final accounts and the relative proportions in which they are found reflect key aspects of the economic history of the Hungarian Kingdom. Both gold and silver currencies occur in the book.

In the case of gold, the currency used is the Hungarian florin, in Latin *florenus auri* or *florenus aureus*, German *Gulden in gold* (MMKr I.32.1a, p. 5). The name red florin (*rote Gulden*) is occasionally used as well (MMKr I.32.1a, p. 19). Initially, the Hungarian florin, coined from 1325, was a true imitation of the Florentine florin. In the second half of the 14th century, the image on the coin was gradually 'nationalised' by the incorporation of domestic symbolism: the Florentine fleurdelis on the front was replaced by the coat of arms of the reigning monarch and, from the beginning of the 1370s, the figure of the Hungarian saint St Ladislaus appeared on the back of the coin. From the beginning, the Hungarian florin excelled with its fineness of 23 carats and 9 grains, which it retained throughout the Middle Ages: each coin weighed 3.559 grams and contained 3.52 grams of fine gold (Pohl, 1974, pp. 8–15. Draskóczy, 2004, pp. 61–62). Therefore, compared to unstable silver coins, it represented a permanently usable and constant reference value.

The book of accounts mentions silver coins as *denarii* in Latin, also referred to as *parva pecunia*, in German as *Cleyngeld* (MMKr I.32.1a, p. 5). Their amount is at times given in numerals, but more often expressed in terms of accounting monetary units, the so-called accounting florin (*florenus centenarius*), each of which represents the sum of 100, that is to say one accounting florin corresponds to 100 deniers, two accounting florins correspond to 200 deniers, etc. In the book under examination, the accounting florin is abbreviated as *p^C den. flor.*, in summary totals it is also called *florenus camerae*, *Kammergulden* (e.g. MMRk I.32.1a, pp. 14, 16, 18).

Originally, the ratio of 1:100 in the time of the Angevins reflected the actual exchange rate between gold and silver coins,⁴ which was not possible to maintain over the long term. Deniers from different coinages indeed contained different (and thus variable) proportions of silver, which declined over time as the silver coinage was devalued. By reducing the amount of fine silver in each coin, increasing numbers of coins were minted (Huszár, 1979, p. 12. Dvořáková, 2007, pp. 30–33). So, over the years, the gold coinage, that is to say the gold florin with its stable gold content, was worth more and more silver deniers. After some time, inflation became unsustainable and this led to the reintroduction of higher quality silver coinages and the whole cycle started again.

Further confusion was caused by the fact that in the country, there were other (local) monies of account based on a different unit than 100. Sigismund tried to address the situation in his second decree from 31 August 1405, pursuant to which, the sole legal means of payment in financial transactions should be either actual gold florins or the so-called new silver deniers in the accounting amount of 100 pieces per florin.⁵ The regulation reflected established practice and it aimed to unify particular payment systems and to eliminate the use of different local systems. Despite the fact that the accounting florin of 100 dominates in the documents, various local accounting systems based on a different unit than 100 (in the territory of Slovakia for example, whilst in Spiš (Zips) or Košice (Kaschau), the unit was 50) could not be eradicated and these were maintained and continued to be used in practice.⁶

When analysing documents from the late medieval period, it is often a problem to determine the correct proportions (rate) of current deniers and gold coins, which is rarely explicitly given. In the Kremnica book of accounts, the rate is not only specified but, during the brief period of 1423–1425, the declining value of the silver deniers can be observed, falling from 236 to 300 deniers (which may be expressed as 2.36–3 accounting florins) for 1 gold florin. The following data are available:

1423: 236, 240, 250 (MMKr I.32.1a, pp. 67, 10, 11, insert 14)

1424: 270 (MMKr I.32.1a, pp. 17, 18, 19)

1425: 300 (MMKr I.32.1a, p. 25)

The book under study thus provides additional information about the debasement of the silver denier coinage. Shortly after the latest rates found in the examined book, there was another monetary reform. By the decree of 17 March 1427, King Sigismund introduced new coins, so-called major deniers (*moneta maior*), with the prescribed rate to the gold florin of 100:1.⁷ This was intended to restore once again the original ratio between the accounting and gold florin. The account book also mentions exchange operations for small denier coins carried out by the mayor. It does not specify the quantity of silver deniers involved but, as a result of this, the mayor owed 564 gold florins to the town.⁸

3.5 Income and expenditure

The contents of the account book include a review of income and expenditure for the period from 3 February 1423 to 3 August 1424 with

several supplements for the period from 4 August 1424 to 9 March 1425. Individual amounts and items are not arranged chronologically, but in subject groups. This implies that the accounting was not conducted continuously, but only drawn up subsequently. Subtotals and final totals are kept either in gold or in accounting florins depending on the currency used in the particular transaction. Since it is an internal document of the Town Council whose members were directly involved in the transactions and simultaneously also approved them, they knew exactly what was happening and understood the context. As a result, some items are described only briefly, in some cases referring to a particular person without explanation and the additional information is lost to modern researchers. This causes difficulties in interpreting the accounts and in placing them in their proper context. Moreover, in some cases (in the expenditure), the sum totals given do not tally with the sums mentioned in accounting florins within the subject group.

3.5.1 Income

The most important income of a town was from municipal taxes, whose collection was entrusted to the mayor and chosen members of the Town Council. The most important regular tax was the house tax, which in this account appears as one (or two) total sum(s). From later documents, it is known that the house tax was levied on individual houses. The house tax was collected twice a year on the days of St George (24th April) and St Michael (29th September). St George's tax is called *collecta beati Georgii martiris* (MMKr I.32.1a, p. 8), in German *Sankt Jorigenlosung* (MMKr I.32.1a, pp. 17, 19), and in the year 1423, it amounted to 521 gold florins. St Michael's tax was called *lucrum camerae beati Michaelis archangeli* (MMKr I.32.1a, p. 8) and in the given period, amounted to 672 gold florins. These are followed by smaller proceeds from the bathing tax (*census balnei de AD 1423*) of 42 gold florins. An otherwise unspecified tax *angaria nova*, or *Angaria ad novam rationem*, plural *Angariae*, in German *Umgelt*, was accounted for in accounting florins rather than gold florins. It was calculated twice per year, from Pentecost in the year 1423 to St Michael's day (790.64 accounting florins) and from St Michael's day to the following Pentecost in the year 1424 (1,216.18 accounting florins). The total income from the tax was 2,006.82 accounting (= chamber) florins. It may be assumed that this income under the name *angariae* included market fees, a wine tapping tax and income from town property (nearby villages).

The income from the financial year also contained the so-called old and new debts of individual tax collectors. Besides the Mayor,

Zaidel Tysler, other members of the Town Council, Jacob Drusel (also referred to as Druslin), Heckel Opicz and Peter Slagauff were authorised to collect taxes. The mentioned outstanding debts were probably settlements of withdrawals from past years, the reciprocal offsetting of loans, specifically selected items, etc. The specific reasons for the outstanding debts are not known, they may be debts from several years in the past, but these shall be considered as income for the period of 1423–1424.

In one case, the entry concerning Peter Slagauff's previous debt contains a note that indicates that it is the balance from the collection of the tax on wine, which was levied at 2 gold florins per barrel. In this way 111 barrels were taxed with the sum of 222 gold florins, which were exceptionally converted to accounting florins at the rate 240 deniers/gold florin giving a total of 532.80 accounting florins (MMKr I.32.1a, p. 6). Finally, the income included the current status of the town treasury (Latin *in parato in ladula civitatis*, German *In bereitchaft in der stat laden*) of 1,024 gold florins (MMKr I.32.1a, pp. 7, 16).

Table 3.1 Income in gold florins (*floreni auri*)

Old debt of Mayor Zaidel for money changing	564
Old debt of Peter Slagauff	117
Old debt of Peter Slagauff from the St Michael's taxation	8
Old debt of Heckel Opiczaz from the St George's taxation	45
Current St George's taxation	521
Current St Michael's taxation	672
Bathing tax	42
Current status of the town treasury	1,024
Total	2,993

Table 3.2 Income in accounting florins (*p^cden. flor*)

Old debt of Mayor Zaidel Tyssler	994.20
Old debt of Peter Slagauff (including 532.80 accounting florins from the wine tax)	1,859.12
Old debt of Peter Slagauff: the money received on behalf of the city from Mr Leustach from the previous accounting	400
<i>Angariae</i> – income from Pentecost (20 May 1423) to St Michael's day (29 September 1423)	790.64
<i>Angariae</i> – income from St Michael's day (20 May 1423) to the following Pentecost (11 June 1424)	1,216.18
Total	5,260.14

The total income of the town (Tables 3.1 and 3.2), including the current status of the town treasury, for the financial year 1423–1424 amounted to 2,993 gold florins and 5,260.14 accounting florins. The grand total for income entered in the account book is mathematically correct after summing the individual items.

Besides the aforementioned income, there was a specific tax on wine intended for the king in the amount of 832 gold florins (*impositio super vina per dominum nostrum regem*), which is accounted for separately, and the book notes that this should not be taken into account in the total amount of income.⁹ The receipt of 14 September 1423 does not mention 832, but 812 gold florins, which at the rate of two florins per barrel, would account for 406 transported barrels (MMKr I.42.1.2: 14 September 1423). This tax was certainly written out in relation to the expected visit of the king and his entourage, which took place in the autumn of 1424 (which is also mentioned under expenditure), and it is a staggering amount given the notoriously high consumption of Sigismund and his court.

3.5.2 Expenditure

In comparison to income, the expenditure accounted for appears to be both less clear and incomplete. The total sum is not indicated and various subtotals in accounting florins given in the account are mathematically incorrect in the sense that they do not equal the sum of the individual items listed in paragraphs (although the order of the mathematical sum tends to be close to this amount). Therefore, it is likely that the accounting for the expenditure was not completed. Many obscure items appear in the account while, at the same time, it is missing common items needed to run the town, which are known from later years (security policy, cleaning, construction, etc.), and which certainly existed in this period and had apparently been recorded in other documents that do not survive (Štefánik and Lukačka, 2010, p. 228). Despite this, this part of the accounting provides a valuable insight especially into special expenses and financial relationships with the monarch.

The standard tax paid to the monarch consisted of 300 gold florins twice a year (collected as St George's tax and Michaelmas tax) and a New Year gift of 100 gold florins every year. The St George's tax of 300 gold florins was sent to the royal treasurer G. Sepussy on 16 June 16 1423 (MMKr I.32.1a, p. 11), for which he issued a receipt (MMKr I.42.1.2: 14 September 1423). In October 1423, the King Sigismund discharged Kremnica of regular taxes for three years including the New Year gift, a total of 700 gold florins a year, until Michaelmas 1426 (MMKr I.20.1.1: 13 October

1423). The remission of regular taxes was compensated for by a number of exceptional taxes and loans, which will be mentioned later on.

In the expenditure statement from the period of 1423–1424, there are two notable groups of expenses, both with regard to relations with the monarch. The first group consists of considerable travel and entertainment expenses during the period of 1423–1424. The second group includes extremely high, even for a rich mining town such as Kremnica, consecutive loans to the king and related additional taxes. Both items appear to be related to numerous trips made to the king or high provincial dignitaries, which probably involved negotiations about them.

The mayor and other town officials undertook trips to the royal court in Buda, or places where the monarch himself, or important dignitaries of the kingdom, resided (Košice – German Kaschau, Zvolen – German Altsohl, Turčianske Teplice – German Stuben Bad). In addition to personal travel expenses, there are records of expenditure on entertainment/toasts on behalf of representatives of the town or for public display.¹⁰ On several occasions within the expenditure account, there occur smaller sums spent by various townspeople in the service of the town and paid to them through tax deductions (e.g. 500 deniers for Peter Stadler, who gave his horse into the service of the town).

Furthermore, the expenditure accounted for, includes the costs of the rededication of St Michael's church and episcopal mass totalling 31.2 accounting florins. This was necessary because the church had been profaned by the murder of the burgher Fridlin there. For this matter, the town officials travelled to Rome. The journey to Rome undertaken by the town council members, along with several important townspeople, was certainly an important event in the life of Kremnica; it was even used as a major milestone for dating events.¹¹ Although the entire journey no doubt necessitated substantial costs, these are not quantified in the examined account and may be partially contained in those 'old debts' or separate invoices in the documents, which were not retained. Also of interest are the data regarding the single paid functionary of the town – the notary. In 1423, there are reported remunerations of 84 gold florins (= 201 accounting florins) and in 1424, a salary of 100 gold florins, which remained outstanding by the town (MMKr I.32.1a: 1423–1424, pp. 10, 21).¹²

In the remaining part of the expenditure account, there are several partial payments made or expected, and payments to (or made by) individual town officials without context and subtotals. The Tables 3.3 and 3.4 contain only a selection and not a complete list of all expenses:

Table 3.3 Expenditure in accounting florins (*p^cden. flor*)

Trips by Jacob Drusel to the town of Zvolen for king and to Turčianske Teplice and wine for the king	662.45
Trips by the mayor Zaidel Tyssler to Buda, Košice, including expenses for offered wine	677.41
Consecration of St Michael's church and episcopal mass (2,200 + 920 deniers)	31.20
Toasts and other expenses (3,304 deniers)	33.04
Remuneration of the notary for the year 1423	201.8
274 deniers for Martin Czusppa in the matter of the Banská Bystrica Mayor and the town of Lubietová	2.74
500 deniers to Peter Stadler for the provision of a horse in the town's service	5

Table 3.4 Expenditure in gold florins (*floreni auri*)

Two payments of 16 gold florins for Peter Slagauff and for the notary Peter for the trip to Košice	32
St George's tax to the monarch	300
Fess for the stone quarry in Sv. Kríž, two times 16 gold florins ¹³	32
Smaller payments for the trips to Buda and Székesfehérvár (2 + 3 gold florins)	5

3.6 Loans and special taxes

In terms of history, the most interesting information may be found at the end of the examined book, which documents the intertwined relations of Kremnica and the monarch.

In September 1423, the town lent Sigismund 2,000 gold florins from the town funds (*de pecunia civitatis*, MMKr I.32.1a, p. 22.) to be paid from the proceeds of business in Lubietová. Lubietová is a small mining town located about 20 km from Kremnica. Its mining, in contrast to the 'golden town' of Kremnica, is associated with copper and with the participation of townspeople from Banská Bystrica (Štefánik and Lukačka, 2010, pp. 265–266); in the examined book of accounts, however, one may find unique information about payments of significant amounts of the Lubietová debt attended by important individuals from Kremnica: Jacob Drusel, Hans Smuczer, Heyczmann Cwisler.¹⁴

A year later, the town of Kremnica lent the monarch 1,000 gold florins to be given to the Chamber Count.¹⁵ During this period, that is to say between September and November 1424, the king personally visited Kremnica (*in descenssu domini nostri Regis in nostri medio*. MMKr I.32.1a,

p. 23) and, for this occasion, a special tax (*pro taxa speciali*) of 2,600 gold florins was issued, of which 2,500 were intended for the king and 100 for the queen (MMKr I.32.1a, p. 24).

The contributions of the town and wealthiest Kremnica burghers are broken down individually in the book:

Finally, in 1425, the town provided a loan for an additional 3,333 gold florins (= 10,000 accounting florins). The amount was to be refunded by the Chamber Count Peter Reichel from the proceeds the royal tax on mining (*urbura*),¹⁶ which probably never took place. The transfer of four villages for an unspecified amount (*pro certa sumpma pecuniaria*) from the Chamber to the property of the town in 1429 is probably related to this loan, which the Chamber was unable to repay.¹⁷ This resulted in the expansion of the town's property.

The loans granted (Tables 3.5 and 3.6) and the aforementioned property changes are related to the events surrounding the destruction of the first town book of Kremnica as earlier indicated in the introduction to its

Table 3.5 Contributions of the town and wealthiest burghers

The town of Kremnica (<i>civitas de propriis</i>) in two payments of 500 and 700 gold florins	1,200
Johannes Smuczer	300
Andreas	300
Mayor Zaidlinus	100
Jacob Drusel	100
Hans Smuczer	100
Heyczmann Cwisler	100
Heckel Opicz	50
Peter Slagauff	50
Peter Long	100
Matthias Ebner	200
Total	2,600

Table 3.6 Loans provided by the town

Date of loan	Gold florins	Page in the book of accounts
26 September 1423	2,000	pp. 17, 22
1 September 1424	1,000	p. 23
10 November 1424	2,500	p. 24
9 March 1425	3,333	p. 25
Total	8,833	

successor. At the time of the last loan (February to March 1425), the annual elections of the town officials were conducted.¹⁸ In 1425, the Chamber Count Peter Reichel tried to promote his protégé Matthias Ebner, coming originally from Nuremberg, to the position of mayor or at least as a sworn member of the Town Council. Several members of the Town Council stood up against this, as well as the head of the town administration – the notary Peter, who was the author of the book of accounts studied here. They accused Ebner, while in the service of the former Chamber Count, Reichel's predecessor, of misappropriating money and having a reputation as a dishonest man. Both sides of the dispute sent messengers to the king who commissioned his official – vicetavernicus Demeter together with the representatives (mayors) of five other towns in Central Slovakia to consider the case and pass judgement. Since Ebner provided proof that he had settled his claims with the former Chamber Count, he was found innocent, the accusers were sentenced to death and the town book with entries regarding Ebner's guilt was ordered to be publicly burned (*Sic dictum Civitatis librum ipse Demetrius vicemagister thavarnicorum igni comburi disposuisset et commississet publice et manifeste*). The condemned men, along with the whole town of Kremnica appealed directly to King Sigismund, who reopened the case again in Trenčín (West Slovakia) with the participation of mayors from major royal towns (among others, Buda, Pressburg (Bratislava), and Košice (Kaschau)). After hearing both sides, they repealed the death sentences as they came to the conclusion that Ebner had indeed deceived the Chamber Count and that the subsequent settlement of claims did not change anything regarding the original fraud. The court verdict of 19 January 1426 rehabilitated the sworns (aldermen), including the above-mentioned largest taxpayers and payers of loans to the king (Johannes Smuczer, Heyczmann Cwisler) and the notary Peter, who had been imprisoned, and declared them blameless. The town book was ordered to be preserved, but this proved impossible as, in the meantime, the Chamber Count Peter Reichel and his supporter, the newly elected mayor Stefan Graupner, had managed to destroy the book. Graupner had a personal interest in the matter because, in the book, there was a certain entry that he wanted destroyed regarding the entitlement to payment of an inheritance. The surviving material does not mention any consequences for the Chamber Count Peter Reichel, but one may assume that he did not quarrel with townspeople any more. The entire matter and related disputes are the subject of the first entries in the new town book from 1430, which was drawn up by the new town notary Georg Lauterreyen. In addition to these entries, most of the preserved documents from this period in the town archives deal with this matter, which demonstrates the importance of this

event, which lived on in the communal memory of Kremnica for many years.¹⁹ For the burghers, the positive outcome after the personal involvement of the monarch was apparently closely related to the fact that he had been recently provided with large loans by the town. This is probably also the reason why this book of accounts was carefully kept and unlike other town books and registers of the period, is the only one that has been preserved to this day.

Notes

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1. The original is located in: Štátny archív v Banskej Bystrici, pobočka Kremnica, fond Magistrát mesta Kremnica (State Archives in Banská Bystrica, branch Kremnica, Kremnica Municipal Fund), hereinafter referred to as MMKr, sign. I.1.1.1: 17 November 1328.
2. The original is located in: Štátny archív v Banskej Bystrici, pobočka Banská Štiavnica, fond Magistrát mesta Banská Štiavnica (State Archives in Banská Bystrica, branch Banská Štiavnica, Banská Štiavnica Municipal Fund), hereinafter referred to as MMBŠMOL, sign. IV-759, box 15, no. 1101, p. 57.
3. *Consideratis quibusdam diversitatibus librorum et registrarum...* MMKr, Liber civitatis – Stadtbuch, p. 15.
4. *...pro floreno aureo Centum denariorum de nova nostra moneta Coronas dicta... ..computando.* Magyar Országos Levéltár (Hungarian State Archives) DF 270055: 13 March 1384. Ed. Fejér, 1834, Codex vol. X/1, pp. 151153 (no. LXXXII), p. 170 (no. XCI)
5. *...Computationem autem, seu numerationem florenorum in regno nostro currentium hoc modo duximus limitandum, quod omnibus numeris dictorum florenorum minoribus in nonnullis regni nostri partibus, uti agnovimus, abusive adinventis, prorsus abolitis in quarumlibet rerum et bonorum emptionibus et venditionibus alter numerus ipsorum florenorum non dicantur, nec computentur, nisi florenus aureus veri, boni et iusti ponderis, vel alter florenus per centum novos denarios computatus.* *Decreta regni mediaevalis Hungarie* vol. II, 1992, pp. 47–48 (Art. 7). Eds. János M Bak; Pál Engel; James Ross Sweeney. Salt Lake City : Charles Schlacks.
6. *computi scepusiensis, computi Cassensis.* Zsigmondkori oklevéltár (hereinafter referred to as ZsO) vol. X, p. 91, no. 163: 19 February 1423, also in Satu Mare in today's Romania (*compoti civitatis Zathmariensis*). ZsO X, p. 93, no. 168: 20 February 1423.
7. *...monetam vero argenteam maiorem a modo in antea cudi et fabricari de argento finissimo in tanta quantitate, quod de una marca puri argenti exeant denarii sexcenti, quorum centum currant pro floreno auri.* *Decreta regni mediaevalis Hungarie* II, p. 60 (Art. I). The aforementioned larger denier weighed an average of 0.77 g with the silver fineness of 0.54. Huszár, 1979, p. 12.

8. ...*summa der schuld here Zaidels von dez wechsels wegen dez cleynen geldes als vorgeschriben stet, facit flor. auri 564*. MMKr I.32.1a, p. 5.
9. ...*non debet ad predictam summam rationis poni et locari*. MMKr I.32.1a, p. 9.
10. *pro honore civitatis, pro omnibus et singulis propinacionibus et honoribus civitatis* MMKr I.32.1a, p. 10.
11. ...*ante recessum ...; in recess dominorum ad curiam romanam*, MMKr I.32.1a, pp. 57.
12. Fejérpataky's edition incorrectly states the year 1423 for the notary salary, the original states the year 1424. Fejérpataky, 1885, p. 623.
13. MMKr I.32.1a, s. 21. Acknowledgements of such payments from previous years: MMKr I.27.1.1: 7 October 1414; I. 27.1.5: 19 December 1477; I.27.1.7: 11 October 1481.
14. MMKr I.32.1a, pp. 1011. Given the identical names of people involved with Lubietová is probably also related to the specifically assessed tax of 5,000 gold florins, of which, except for this brief mention, there is no more information. „*pro una speciali exactione facta flor. auri V^M de Smucz(er) et de Drus(e)l et aliis complicitibus suis*“. MMKr I.32.1a, p. 24.
15. MMKr I.32.1a, p. 23. Comparable loans of the same amount of 1,000 gold florins are documented several decades before. MMKr I.26.1.1: 6 July 1389; I.20.1.2: 13 July 1399; I.20.1.3: 10 January 1404.
16. ...*quosquidem Petrus Raychel comes urburarum de eisdem urburis regalibus reddere et persolvere debet civitati e converso*. MMKr I.32.1a, p. 25.
17. Matunák, 1928, p. 466, no. 13: 6 June and 28 September 1429 (= orig. MMKr I.1.1.31: 28 September 1429).
18. The election of Mayor and Town Council were usually held on the first Sunday in February, exceptionally in the first half of March (Štefánik and Lukačka, 2010, p. 227).
19. MMKr I.25.1.1: 19 January 1426; I.25.1.2: 24 April 1426; I.25.1.3: 12 September 1426; I.44.1.3: 17 January 1427; I. 44.1.4: 17 January 1427; MMKr Stadtbuch, pp. 15–19. Lamoš, 1969, pp. 141–143. Križko, 1964, pp. 295–297.

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Part II

Medieval Court Funding

4

Financiers to the Blind King: Funding the Court of John the Blind (1310–1346)

Zdeněk Žalud

4.1 Economic history and John the Blind

In current Czech – as well as in German – historiography, the history of business in the Middle Ages, and especially a study of the rulers' finances, lies outside out mainstream research interests. This is not just because historians follow trends believed to be more attractive to readers, but also because we do not have sufficient sources from which to study financial history. Accounts of the Bohemian king and his court do not survive before the second half of the 14th century (Mersiowsky, 2008, p. 266) and the later situation for Czech lands is, unfortunately, not satisfactory either. Therefore it is not surprising that studies on the finances of earlier periods are based on documents, forms, letters and narrative sources rather than accounting records. Despite this handicap, since the 1970s Czech historians have accepted ideas from German scholarship, notably the concept of 'Hochfinanz' (Veronesi, 2008, p. 185), which focuses its attention not only on urban financiers as carriers of the ruler's credit, but also on the reforms of the Imperial coinage, the impulse for which came from financiers of Lombardy. As a result of the absence of accounting sources, such studies aim more to describe financial mechanisms, and focus on prosopography and relationships within the rulers' courts. These works generally neglect the finances of King John the Blind, to which Jarmila Hásková dedicated her brief study (Hásková, 1981). His finances as Count of Luxembourg were described and assessed by Winfried Reichert (Reichert, 1993). Reichert reminds us that credit and its mobilization were very important for the reign, and especially for the territorial politics of rulers in the late Middle Ages.

Adopting this perspective, we will look at the financial balance of John of Luxembourg's reign.

In historiography, there is deep-rooted belief that John of Luxembourg wasted money. The king's bad reputation derives mainly from the Zbraslav Chronicle (*Chronicon Aulae Regiae*), whose author Peter of Zittau painted King John as a tyrant from 1319, in order that he could depict John's wife Elizabeth, on the contrary, as the continuator – albeit renounced and deprived of power – of the Přemyslids' ruling traditions (Hilsch, 1997). Peter, therefore, mentions each of John's tax proclamations, claiming that he came to Prague mainly to collect taxes for his war crusades and knightly games, and then he went back to Rhineland with bags full of money (Emler, 1884, pp. 265, 273; Reichert, 1993, pp. 289–300). The chronicler appreciates John's bravery, but he condemns his generosity and expenditure on display. Similarly, John's handling of money is criticised in the self-biography of Charles IV (*Vita Caroli Quarti*) (Abdullahi, 2013). A contrary view is provided in the *Chronicles of Froissart* and in the epic works by Guillaume de Machaut, where John appears as the embodiment of a good knight and ruler (Margue, 1996). Both of these exaggerated assessments need thorough correction: firstly, by the close analysis of extant diplomatic and numismatic sources, and secondly, from a comparative perspective, in the context of how other late medieval rulers handled their finances. Such financial development was determined not only by dynastic or territorial needs, but also by the demands of keeping up appearances. Today we no longer have appropriate measures to assess the public manifestation and reception of the rulers' power. Therefore, it is not possible to talk about the profitability or uselessness of a ruler's expenses.

This discussion will start by describing the facts and opportunities facing John and then reflect on how they determined the development of his finances. Subsequently, we will introduce his more important lenders and assess their influence on the finances and politics of the reign.

4.2 Royal debts in Bohemia and Moravia 'inherited' by John the Blind

The reign of John of Luxembourg was beset from beginning to end by financial difficulties. In this respect, he was not different from his father, Holy Roman Emperor Henry VII (Mersiowsky, 2008, pp. 266–268; Veronesi, 2008, p. 194). Yet, as King of Bohemia, he had substantial financial resources at his disposal. However, he also assumed, in

addition to these resources, a heavy debt burden from his predecessors, the Přemyslid dynasty and Henry of Carinthia (Emler, 1884, pp. 93, 110; Hásková, 1981, p. 58). Considering these debts (see Table 4.1), although John was not bound by any last Will, he could not refuse repayment of some debts as the creditors of the King's Chamber, such as Henry of Lipa, were his chief supporters at the battle against Henry of Carinthia, which secured the throne for John. The loss of accounting documents does not allow us to calculate the total amount of these debts; instead, we are only informed about them in diplomatic and narrative sources:

At the end of 1310, John took over the indebted kingdom. The growing financial demands of the royal chamber bore heavily on the towns of Kutná Hora and Prague at that time. Rough collection of money caused a revolt by Prague elites in summer 1319, which was suppressed by the king (Emler, 1884, pp. 252–253). After he reached a compromise agreement with the Bohemian nobility in 1318, John was able to enter the complicated arena of international politics, carry out expansion in Central Europe – into Upper Lusatia and Silesian Principalities (Emler, 1884, pp. 254, 285) in particular – and also extend his home domains in Luxembourg (Reichert, 1993, pp. 453–466). As we do not have the

Table 4.1 Creditors and debts

Creditors of the King's Chamber	Debt/pledge + year	References
Elisabeth Richenza, a widow of Bohemian King Wenceslaus II and Rudolph of Habsburg	more than 16,000 marks in 1310; 10,000 marks in 1319/pledge of five Czech towns for 40,000 marks in 1307	Kopičková (2003, p. 68); Emler (, 1890, no. 502).
Duke Frederick of Habsburg and his brothers	50,000 marks in 1311; amortized in 1322/pledge of Moravia in 1311, three Moravian towns in 1312	Mezník (1999, pp. 14, 15, 19, 29); Emler (1884, p. 264).
Duke Boleslaus of Liegnitz	8,000 marks in 1311, probably amortized in 1318/pledge of the Duchy of Opava (Troppau)	Emler (1884, p. 178); Emler (1890, no. 23); Spěváček (1994, pp. 163–164).
Henry of Lipa, Bohemian baron	debt of royal chamber from the period of Henry of Carinthia 1309: 10,320 marks	Emler (1882, no. 2202).
Rinieri, Alphardo, Cyno of Florence, Michael of Cologne	28,000 marks (with interest) in 1316	Hásková (1981, p. 58); Reichert (1987, pp. 279–280).

accounting records to reconstruct exactly how these activities were funded, we can only indicate which financial resources – both from his Central European domains and from Luxembourg – he might have used for it.

4.3 Financial resources

4.3.1 Taxes

John was criticized many times that the high taxes collected in his Czech lands flowed away to improve his Luxembourg domains, to fund John's military business in Lorraine, or else that the money ended up in the hands of his lenders in the west of the Roman Empire. John had at his disposal the so-called general tax from the estates of the nobility, monasteries and towns (*berna generalis*) and also the so-called special tax (*berna specialis*), which was collected from the royal towns and monasteries. Although John, in his inaugural charters in 1310 and 1311, admitted limitations to his rights of general tax and he confirmed those limitations several times, he managed to carry through relatively frequent collections of taxes (in 1323, 1325, 1327, 1328, 1331, 1332, 1333, 1335 and 1336) (Krofta, 1931, p. 24). Regular and additional taxes were also collected in the County of Luxembourg, but their revenue was considerably lower than in the Bohemian Kingdom (Reichert, 1993, pp. 120–127). Unfortunately, the total amount of taxes in all countries under John's reign cannot be calculated, as the first surviving Bohemian revenue register dates from 1379.

4.3.2 Precious metal mining and its revenue – the king's mining revenue (*urbura*) and coining

John's incomes from his Czech lands were based mainly on the highly developed production of silver, chiefly in Kutná Hora (Kuttenberg), where the coining process was also centralized. The share from the mined silver intended for the king was called *urbura*, and it represented one eighth of the smelted metal, which, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, meant about 6,500–6,800 kg each year. According to the *Chronicon Aulae Regiae*, in 1315/16 John could count on 500–600 marks per week from the mines of Kutná Hora, that is to say 6,580 kg per year at least (Emler, 1884, p. 228). The profitability of the Kutná Hora mint can be roughly estimated at 26,000 – 31,000 marks of Prague groschen per year (Reichert, 1993, pp. 294–295). At the beginning of the 1320s, the royal chamber sent abroad to the king one and a half thousand

silver marks every week from this revenue (Hásková, 1981, p. 60; Irsigler, 2013, p. 104). In an effort to increase his monetary revenue, King John reduced the quality of Prague groschen on three occasions. Although that reduced the intrinsic value of the coin by approximately 13%, we do not know of any complaints from his contemporaries. Louder complaints were made over the devaluation of the so-called small coin or *parvus* (1 groschen was worth 12 *parvi* at first). Perhaps the rapid increase in the value of gold and the prospect of gaining income from the minting of gold coins, lay behind John's introduction of the gold florin in 1325 (1 florin was worth 30 groschen). (Hásková, 1981, p. 62; Reichert, 1987, p. 281; Irsigler, 2013, p. 105).

4.3.3 Incomes from mercenary service, fees and alliance agreements

Such incomes, which according to Winfried Reichert are a feature of 'warfare monetarism', were not only for the Bohemian kings, but they were also common in the west of the Roman Empire (Reichert 1993, pp. 187–189). In 1307, Henry VII, Count of Luxembourg, and his brother Walram promised their help against the Bishop of Metz to the burghers of Metz in return for military pay of at least 50,000 *livres gros tournois* (Reichert, 1993, pp. 211–212). After the new English–French conflict had begun, Henry VII became, in 1294, a vassal of the French king, receiving an hereditary chamber fee of 500 *livres gros tournois*. Another acceptance of French money occurs between 1322 and 1324, when King Charles IV provided John with a life pension of 4,000 *livres gros tournois* from the royal treasury in Paris. This pension was converted into land by King Philip VI in December 1334 when he granted John the dominion of Méhun-sur-Yèvre as a fiefdom with a yearly revenue of 4,000 *livres gros tournois*. In 1337, John confirmed his alliance with Philip: John was to help him in the coming war against King Edward III, and against Emperor Louis IV the Bavarian, for which Philip promised not only to pay the soldiers' wages and potential damages, but he also contributed an additional 30,000 *livres gros paris* for his ally to purchase equipment and weaponry (Reichert, 1993, pp. 224–227).

4.3.4 Incomes from war by means of booty and ransom

In the Middle Ages, warfare was considered as a legitimate and common political means of resolving conflicts and a valid way to establish law. The primary object of participants in warfare was to gain booty and ransom after a successful military encounter. Prospects of booty and high war compensation were probably the main motives in the so-called

War of Four Lords (*Vierherrenkrieg*), which was a campaign by King John, his uncle Archbishop Balduin of Trier, Duke Friedrich IV of Lothringen and Count Edward I of Bar against the town of Metz. Metz was then the financial and credit centre of Upper Lorraine, and thus the residence of the families that were lenders to Henry VII and to John the Blind. It is not surprising then, that the Chronicle of Metz states that the main reason for the war feud was the greed of the allied princes, and especially their wish to get rid of their debts to the financiers of Metz by means of this conflict. The alliance agreement from 1324 dealt with the distribution of the expected war booty, from which one half should pass to King John and archbishop Balduin. However, financial profit was scanty: John's share of the contribution that Metz was to pay, according to the additional agreement, amounting to 15,000 pounds of small Tournai groats, could not compensate for the devastation of his county and his expenses. Only the internal dissension in the summer of 1326 between the burghers of Metz about the turnover tax that would cover war expenses, gave the Counts of Luxembourg and Bar the opportunity to intervene. In return for the promise of a subsidy in the amount of 54,000 pounds of small Tournai groats, from which 34,000 was intended for John, the Counts made an alliance with the families of the town elites that they had to leave their hometown as a result of the internal conflict. The exiles that joined the Luxembourgers paid him the promised soldiers' wages in 1327 (Reichert, 1993, pp. 199–202).

Between the years 1332 and 1334, John tried to gain the duchy of Limburg, which was controlled by the Duchy of Brabant. As a pretext he used the fact that the dowry of John's mother Margaret of Brabant, promised in 1292, had still not been paid. John took advantage of this local war to demand a dowry from the Duke of Brabant and he threatened him with war. A war was averted by the French King Philip VI of Valois. Eventually, for giving up the Duchy of Limburg, John received 200,000 guildens (Reichert, 1993, pp. 326–330).

4.3.5 Loans and credit

Opinions on the character of rulers' credit in the Middle Ages are inconsistent. According to Winfried Reichert it was a personal credit that created only a personal obligation for the sovereign lord, regardless of the purpose for which the loan was used (Reichert, 1993, pp. 301–302). To the contrary, the authors of *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe* claim that, 'in reality, rulers repeatedly assumed responsibility for the debts of their predecessors', and as evidence they state the actions of King Philip III of France and Edward III of England (Postan et al., 1979, p. 430).

We can also find subtle differences in historians' assessments of the position of creditors in relation to crowned heads of state. Reichert argues that rulers' creditors only rarely had an effective means of protection for their interests in relation to the debtor. Rulers guaranteed repayment of the debts to creditors by issuing debt certificates, finding guarantors or hostages, funding the debt by pledges, or assigning certain sources of revenues to creditors (Reichert, 1993, p. 302). On the other hand, as *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe* observes, 'there is no evidence that the temporary character of princely obligations deterred financiers from advancing money to medieval governments. Their chances of securing repayment from rulers always depended on purely practical considerations. In the relations of princes with financiers there was often complete continuity from one reign to the next, just as there was continuity in most other routine matters' (Postan et al., 1979, p. 431).

Even the extent of the indebtedness of medieval rulers is up for debate. In connection with the reign of King John, Czech historian Jiří Spěváček talks about the ruler's 'pathological profligacy and ignorance of the value of money' (Spěváček, 1994, p. 384). The criticism that John dissipated the royal property and rights in Bohemia and Moravia during the first half of the 14th century is, besides narrative sources, also strengthened by John's repeated promises that he would never entrust nor pledge the royal castle to a stranger, and that he would never appoint a stranger as a burgrave, for example in 1323 (Emler, 1890, nos. 29 and 893). Here, financial matters are joined by an increasing self-confidence expressed by the provincial representatives of the rising estates. Following the spirit of the *Chronicon Aulae Regiae*, John's debts were linked to his absence from the Czech lands, and thus also with his lack of interest in those domains (Mezník, 1999, p. 33). These reflections are, however, one-sided and they do not take into consideration the wider financial context of the medieval economy. *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe* points out that 'it would be mistaken to attribute the heavy indebtedness of many medieval rulers to their alleged irresponsibility in financial matters....The ordinary revenues of the majority of medieval rulers often barely sufficed for their everyday needs and did not allow them to accumulate substantial reserves' (Postan et al., 1979, p. 431). According to Reichert, the persistent deficits incurred by the administration reflected the ongoing commercialization of the reign in the 14th century. The problem was not that the territorial government lacked economic resources, but was mainly in its inability to convert these resources into the form of coinage (Reichert, 1996, pp. 278–279).

During his reign, King John amassed a disorganized and vast tangle of debts (Reichert, 1993, pp. 354–355). Their repayment by John's successors – Emperor and King Charles IV and Wenceslaus, Duke of Luxembourg – was in some cases prolonged until the 1370s. John's last will from 1340 shows that the blind king was aware of the problem, and he appealed to his successors to continue repaying his debts (Emler, 1892, no. 819; Thomas, 2008). Among the executors of his last will, we can find royal financiers and creditors from the upper social classes: his uncle Balduin, Archbishop of Trier, Rudolph, Duke of Saxony, noblemen from Bohemia (Peter of Rosenberg, Vaněk of Wartenberg) and Luxembourg (Arnold of Arlon) as well as the Abbots of Sedlec (Sedletz) and Zbraslav (Königsaal, Aula Regia), Cistercian monasteries in Bohemia that were repeatedly burdened by royal taxes. The range of John's creditors was, of course, more varied: it included the king's more distant relatives (his cousin John, Count of Hennegau-Beaumont), participants in tournaments, John's feudal officials (John of Berwart, seneschal of County of Luxembourg), members of urban elites (in the cities of Prague, Kutná Hora, Breslau, Luxembourg, and Metz) and 'professional' financiers (Reinhard of Schönau) (Pauly, 2011, p. 33). Based on existing sources, it is not easy to describe a typical financial relationship between King John and his creditors, which, of course, depended on and affected the social and political situation of both parties. However, we can introduce as *pars pro toto* four relatively well documented individual financiers to King John: two of whom were active mainly in Czech lands, the third came from Silesia, and the last from the County of Luxembourg.

4.4 Financiers

4.4.1 Frenzlin (Franz) Jacobi

The question to what extent the loans made to the king were voluntary or forced involves mainly members of the urban elite. In Bohemia, these were mostly burghers of the richest cities – Prague and Kutná Hora. Among them, an extraordinary role was played by Frenzlin (Franz) Jacobi, a member of the Prague family of Welfl. During the revolt by the Prague burghers in 1319, the Welfl family showed their loyalty to the king, which brought Frenzlin the office of King's Reeve in Prague. In the mid-1320s, he took over the lucrative office of King's Subchamberlain, who was responsible for administering royal cities and monasteries in the Bohemian state, in both judicial and financial matters. Although Bohemian rulers usually appointed noblemen to this post, the first

three exceptions were made in favour of members of the Welf family (Musílek, 2011, p. 119). Frenzlin's qualification for this post reflected the family capital and a network of social contacts, working on an international level. It is known that Frenzlin corresponded not only with the king's uncle Balduin, Archbishop of Trier, but also with John's son-in-law Henry, Duke of Lower Bavaria (e.g. Jacobi, 1841, nos. 97 and 8). He accompanied his ruler on his campaigns as a nobleman with his own troop of knights (Jacobi, 1841, nos. 117 and 139); we do not know, however, whether he was formally knighted. He accepted royal estates as pledges for his numerous loans; at first the large domain of Poděbrady (Tadra, 1882, no. 66) and later the strategically important castle of Přimda (Pfrimbürg). At the same time that he was given Pfrimbürg in pledge, he owned his own free estates near Prague (Tomek, 1892, pp. 307–308). In this, he was not any different from other leading Prague elites who built their own domains in the environs of the capital (Hásková, 1981, pp. 59–60).

We can learn about Frenzlin's activities as a financier from his correspondence included in a contemporary formulary that contained the proper forms of various documents. We can see from this how persistently burgher creditors had to collect repayment of their debts. Unfortunately, we cannot discover from this source Frenzlin's motivations for making these loans, or their exact amount and dates of payment. Most of the letters are related to the period around the year 1331 when Frenzlin was, under pressure from Bohemian noblemen, removed from his office of sub-chamberlain. He himself states that he was removed from the office, which he had received as a pledge for a loan of 1,200 shocks groschen, but he was not repaid the outstanding sum of money (Jacobi, 1841, nos. 31 and 92). Supposedly, Frenzlin's losses reached 5,000 marks, and he repeatedly appealed to King John for payment. At the same time, Frenzlin himself owed debts to members of his family and other creditors from the circle of the town elites. That is why he asked the Duke of Lower Bavaria and Balduin of Trier, to whom he also sent a present, to find him a lucrative office (Jacobi, 1841, nos. 39 and 113). Due to the financial difficulties into which he had fallen by his loans and despite the family capital, Frenzlin was later forced to pledge the domain of Poděbrady. In 1342, we can find him again as a king's reeve in the Old Town of Prague. Perhaps, that was the king's attempt to compensate for Frenzlin's financial damages (Tomek, 1892, p. 308).

Frenzlin's brother Bolek (Bolco Jacobi) was also a rich businessman. This can be seen from one contract made in 1343, in which Peter of Rosenberg, the highest chamberlain of the Kingdom of Bohemia, leased

to Bolek and his fellows, unnamed Prague burghers, for a period of three years, all the gold mines in the kingdom, and also forest estates (*villicationem et forestariam*) around Kamýk nad Vltavou, which Peter himself had received as a pledge from the king in exchange for 3,600 silver marks (Tadra, 1882, no. 200). Frenzlin's other brother Johlin was, together with Boruta, a burgher of Kutná Hora, an administrator, or more likely a lessee of the king's mining revenue (*urbura*) and mint in Kutná Hora. Johlin performed this lucrative office during the years 1341 and 1343 at least, and at other times he was employed in the royal financial administration as a scribe of the chamber and mint. In 1343, Johlin and Boruta charged the King 2,318 silver marks for their financial services (Tadra, 1882, no. 53; Tomek, 1892, pp. 306–307). In repayment of this sum of money, both of the town elites continued to receive rents from the king's mining revenue and coining.

It is necessary to point out that Frenzlin and his brothers did not build any banking house, nor was the quantity of their transactions comparable to the Italian or other German banking houses. Despite that, they were able to perform extensive transactions and deposit up to thousands of silver marks in their first-class stone houses (Musílek, 2011, p. 130). Frenzlin's letters show the typical struggle between a creditor, himself indebted, and his defaulting debtors; unfortunately, we do not know the result of this struggle.

4.4.2 Peter of Rosenberg

Peter came from a wealthy noble family in southern Bohemia, whose members already had influence in provincial politics at the time of last Přemyslids. Peter's father Henry of Rosenberg supported King John on his ascension to the throne. During the conflict between the king and Henry of Lipá, Peter was at first on the royal couple's side, but in 1317 he joined the noblemen in revolt (Emler, 1884, p. 244–245). After their reconciliation in Domažlice (1318), the king spent three weeks with Peter in his domain, where they were occupied with entertainment and hunting (Emler, 1884, p. 248). However, as soon as the following year, Peter supported a military revolt of the Old Town of Prague and Queen Elizabeth against the king (Emler, 1884, p. 253). A period of cooperation followed. Mainly during military campaigns, Peter's services were rewarded by many royal pledges: at first, Peter received the very important royal castle of Zvíkov (Klingenberg) to hold for life, then the town of Weitra in Upper Austria (Emler, 1890, pp. 350–351, no. 892, p. 524, no. 1340). As compensation for his damages in the campaign against the town of Metz, Peter was handed over the right of providing armed

protection (*conductus*) to merchants on the way from Plzeň (Pilsen) to Žebrák (Bettlern). Along this trade route, Peter laid the foundations for his new domain (Emler, 1890, no. 1148). Since the 1330s, Peter had provided the king with not just military, but also financial assistance. He helped John to purchase royal property and rights, which he himself later took over as a pledge, in order that he could offer the king more loans. By 1336, Peter had purchased the royal domains of Protivín, Kamýk nad Vltavou and other estates. In the same year, when he drew up the balance sheet, the royal debts to Peter reached the total sum of 3,975 shocks groschen. To amortize these debts, John assigned to Peter revenues from the provincial tax in some regions, from the royal domain (*villicatio*) of Písek, and mainly from the king's mining revenues (*urbura*) of Kutná Hora (Emler, 1892, no. 253). In August 1336, Peter and William of Landstein were established by the king as 'the special and closest king's servants'. In so doing, John promised them protection from the claims of their own creditors (Emler, 1892, no. 318). In November the same year, the king sold Zbiroh Castle, only recently redeemed from being pledged, to Peter. The deed of the sale explicitly highlighted Peter's effort to provide the king with cash (Emler, 1892, no. 352). In 1337 and 1338, Peter submitted two other balance sheets with the total amount of debts owed by the King, first 1,923 shocks groschen, and then 8,750 shocks groschen (Emler, 1892, nos. 432 and 575). The king promised to repay his mounting debts mainly from the revenues of the Bohemian gold mines. Peter of Rosenberg also tried silver and gold mining on his own. Gold ore from the mines of Rosenberg in the area around Český Krumlov was used as a means of payment in the form of gold ingots (Ernée, Militký and Nováček, 1999, pp. 227–229). Finally, in September 1340, Peter, as one of the most important Bohemian creditors to the blind king, became one of the guarantors to his last Will, in which the repayment of the royal debts was arranged.

4.4.3 Gisco of Reste (de Wid)

Since 1327, Breslau (Wrocław), the most significant business-oriented town of Silesia, had provided a permanent source of taxes and loans to Bohemian rulers. The brothers Johann and Gisco (Gisilbert), whose ancestors came to Breslau from the principality of Münsterberg, were rich merchants (Pfeiffer, 1929, p. 79). Johann, the elder, had bought the feudal estate of Wiltschau near Breslau in 1318, with the approval of Duke Henry VI of Breslau. In documents he was described as a knight (*miles*), and in 1327 he sat on the town council. As far as his financial operations are concerned, he came into contact with King John at the

end of 1329. John gave him ten large fields in Wiltschau as a pledge for 60 marks of groschen, even though he was not entitled to make such pledges as long as Duke Henry VI was alive. Johann of Reste often acted as a witness in the documents of provincial regional council presidents and in the ducal law court (*judicium curiae, Hofgericht*) (Grünhagen, 1866, pp. 36–38). His brother Gisco belonged to a group of merchants from whom the council of Breslau borrowed money, which it repaid in goods, mainly cloth. John of Luxembourg probably encountered Gisco during his first stay in Breslau in April 1327, as in 1328 the Pope, at the king's request, provided Gisco's son John (Hanco) with a canonical office in the Vyšehrad chapter (near Prague) (Grünhagen, 1866, pp. 38–41; Emler, 1890, no. 1495). In 1331 we learn that Gisco was going to start his journey from Prague to Italy, where John of Luxembourg was staying at that time (Jacobi, 1841, no. 135). We also find out about Gisco's financial services, which mainly included providing cash and loans without necessarily knowing their particular purpose. In 1337, the king granted the royal estate of Paschwitz (Fuchshübel) to Gisco who was to use its rent to compensate a nobleman, Johann Czambor of Schiltberg, for damage that he had suffered in the royal service. In 1338, the city of Breslau paid out 300 marks to the provincial regional council president Conrad of Borsnicz and to Gisco for reimbursement of the royal expenses (Grünhagen, 1866, p. 41). The king sometimes got into such a difficult situation, that he had to give money designated for one debtor to another. An example of this can be found in the mandate, surviving in the collection of formulas and whose date has been assigned to 1341, by which the king ordered an unnamed Bohemian monastery not to make a previously agreed repayment of debt to Peter of Rosenberg, but to pay the same amount to Gisco instead (Jacobi, 1841, no. 6).

One of the most important loans of the skilful elite relates to the time that Duke Henry VI resigned his duchy in favour of the king of Bohemia (1327). At that time, Gisco lent the king 40 marks that John granted to Henry, with other estates, in exchange for his resignation. For these and other financial services, on the 20th of March 1334 John of Luxembourg granted Gisco the office of the provincial reeve (*judicium provinciale, Landvogtei*) in Breslau, with all its benefits. Due to the lending, or rather selling, of this office (for 400 marks), Gisco or his messengers travelled to the king as far away as Lüttich (Emler, 1892, no. 25). It is not surprising, that John appointed Gisco as a magistrate in the capital of Silesia (in 1334) and he considered him as his counsellor (documented in 1337). Roughly at the same time, the burghers of Breslau complained to King John that Gisco's actions as a provincial

reeve contravened their rights. So on 29 March 1337, King John released the city of Breslau from the authority of the provincial reeve, which concerned, amongst other things, higher judgment over the noblemen and covered the whole provincial district (*Weichbild*). Subsequently, on 25 June 1349, Gisco sold the office to his sons-in-law Johann and Genlinus of Glogau (Goerlitz, 1962, p. 33).

In connection with this, it remains debatable whether the Reste brothers belonged originally to the urban elite of Breslau and were knighted later, or whether they were already noblemen before they were admitted to the rights of the city of Breslau (Pfeiffer, 1929, p. 79). The Lords of Reste and other feudalized elites from Breslau took part in campaigns of King John, for example in 1340 to northern France. (Emler, 1892, no. 906). Their mutually advantageous relationship with John of Luxembourg and his court is illustrated by the fact that Gisco's son Johann of Reste could, while studying grammar in Soissons, rely on the support of an unnamed relative of the influential royal secretary Nikolaus of Luxembourg, the king's illegitimate son (Jacobi, 1841, no. 134; Grünhagen, 1866, p. 45).

4.4.4 Arnold of Arlon

Gisco of Reste's loans helped the king to get a new territory, that is to say the Duchy of Breslau. The territorial politics of Count John in Luxembourg were supported by loans from Arnold of Arlon, with similar success. Arnold was born into a knightly or lesser noble family in the service of the Luxembourg counts. In 1316 he was a town councillor and reeve of the town of Arlon, later he worked as a provost in the provosty of Arlon. Between 1323 and c. 1330, Arnold filled the office of pension administrator (*Rentmeister*) in the County (Reichert, 1996, pp. 223–228). At the turn of the year 1330/31, he was appointed as the highest administrative officer in the county – the seneschal – and he became one of the most important of John's advisers (Reichert, 1996, pp. 231–233). As the Count's 'minister of finance' he personally lent about 83,130 guildens to John and his son Charles, of which about 75,000 guildens went to John. If we add to that the 20,000 *reales* that had to be repaid to Reinhard of Schönau by Arnold's heirs, the Luxembourgs received roughly 106,500 guildens from the Arlon family. Another 15,665 guildens were given by them to the Archbishop of Tier, the Counts of Bar and numerous noblemen from the Luxembourg region. This total is just an estimate based on surviving bills of debts and other diplomatic documents. The amounts provided to the Luxembourg committal house alone were equivalent to 376.7 kg of gold (Reichert, 1996, p. 269).

Until 1342, when preparations for the election of Prince Charles as the Roman king began, Count John had always been able to pay off his bills of debts, which was in fact testament to Arnold's skills. His enormous loans brought Arnold not only the opportunity to handle a majority of the sovereign lords' pensions, but also the appointment to the office of the regent (*lieutenant*) of the county from 1343 (Reichert, 1996, pp. 238–239). Arnold's landed property came from his father Nemerich who, as a town councillor and wine waiter, belonged to the economically leading class of this town. The funding for a significant part of Arnold's loans probably came from foreign capital, which he had to secure in the form of credit: not only from the towns of Metz and Trier, but also from Lombard financiers in the Mosela and Rhine regions. In connection with this, Winfried Reichert talks about the "continuous and sharply accelerating alternating game of accepting pledges, pledging, and redemption of rulers' rights" (Reichert, 1996, p. 239; in detail Reichert, 1993, pp. 474–490). Arnold managed to administer productive investments with accepted credits, he gained territories that brought the financier new income, using which he could redeem bills of debts. Also, since the mid-1340s, Arnold had been responsible for the imitation and even forging of English sterling coins in the county of Luxembourg. This business, aiming to weaken the English currency, is hardly imaginable without the approval of the sovereign lord. The minting of sterling did not stop with the death of John the Blind, but continued even after Arnold's death (in winter 1347/48) (Reichert, 1996, pp. 272–273).

After John's death, Arnold's pre-eminent position in financial matters led to conflicts with John's son and heir Charles, and with Balduin, the Archbishop of Trier, who was appointed to administer the county from December 1346. Just at that time, the credit system collapsed as a result of higher financial demands needed to ensure Charles's election as Emperor and the enforcement of his royal government in Germany. Both Luxembourgers reigning in the Empire tried to satisfy these demands at the expense of their county of origin. Most probably due to pressure from Archbishop Balduin, Arnold's heirs were *de facto* dispossessed of their property rights after his death in spring 1348. Charles only restored Arnold's inheritance to them on condition that they pay 20,000 *reales* to Charles's main creditor Reinhard of Schönauf by 1 May 1348 (Reichert, 1996, pp. 244–250). After that, the regency of Archbishop Balduin followed in Luxembourg. When in 1354 John's son Wenceslaus took over the county, he inherited a debt burden of about 360,000 guildens, that is to say 1,273 tons of gold (Pauly, 2011, p. 33).

4.5 Conclusion

John the Blind had at his disposal, compared to other rulers of Central Europe, considerable financial resources and, in his lands, employed a variety of methods to benefit from their financial potential. A network of credit transactions helped him to repay the debts accumulated by his predecessors on the Bohemian throne, and also to gain new territories, as we can see in the case of the Principality of Breslau. Credit availability stood in the background of the distribution of the offices and titles, display, and also war businesses, of which the main objectives were booty and compensation. Four of John's significant financiers introduced above, often used foreign capital for the king's loans, which led them into quite a few difficult situations. The attitudes of the feudal lords to their creditors reflected wider financial-political factors: while Peter of Rosenberg was, as a wealthy Bohemian nobleman, able to ensure repayment of his loans, the heirs of Arnold of Arlon were pushed out of financial and administrative activities. Unfortunately, the surviving sources do not allow researchers today to understand the precise motivation, course and result of such credit transactions even for these chosen and better-documented personalities.

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5

The Financial Dimension of the Pledge Policy of King Sigismund of Luxembourg in Bohemia (1419–1437)

Stanislav Bárta

In the Czech historiography the pledging policy of Sigismund of Luxembourg is an issue which cannot be avoided in the assessment of his reign in the Czech lands. Already František Palacký drew attention to Sigismund's 'dissipation of the property of the crown and the church'¹ and following in Palacký's footsteps Sigismund's deeds of pledge were assessed by all the subsequent historical literature (Bárta, 2012, pp. 7–9). Before the end of the 19th century most of the relevant sources were made accessible and in the early 20th century, August Sedláček published an extensive reconstruction of the non-extant Royal Register, with an emphasis on transfers of property and deeds of pledge.² On the basis of these sources Milan Moravec attempted to appreciate Sigismund's deeds of pledge in a comprehensive compilation (Moravec, 1985). His work was criticised mainly by Jaroslav Čechura, who dealt with the issue of secularization of church property in a number of works (e.g. Čechura, 1989, 1994, 2008). Recently, other authors have also dealt with the pledging of church property by King Sigismund (Borovský, 2003, 2005, pp. 133–242).

Despite all this, it turns out that we are missing a thorough assessment of Sigismund's pledging policy. An example of this might be the finding, contrary to Čechura's conclusions, that while the pledges of royal property were a common tool used by Sigismund's predecessors, the pledging of church estates was, on the contrary, a novelty, which was introduced into the Czech lands by King Sigismund and his need to finance his path to the Bohemian throne (Bárta, 2012, p. 36). Therefore,

an in-depth assessment of the pledge policy can be supported only by a thorough study of the pledge charters and their formulae, and a critical assessment of other sources containing records of deeds of pledge.

Selected financial aspects of Sigismund's deed of pledge for the Bohemian recipients will be analysed in the following study. It should refer to some research options in that field. First of all, it is necessary to introduce the range of sources which can be used and subsequently the following three questions will be discussed: Firstly, in which monetary units are the denoted amounts in the pledge charters of Sigismund of Luxembourg? Secondly, whether the pledge amounts correspond to the fulfilled duties, granted loans and so on. Finally, whether the pledge amounts correspond to the value of the pledged estates.

The available sources for the assessment of the financial aspects of Sigismund's pledge policy are mainly the extant original pledge charters, which allow us to study as many conditions of any particular pledge deed as possible. Concerning the Czech lands, 48 original Latin charters, 27 original Czech charters and 12 original German charters are, for now, at disposal. A full quarter of these 87 charters are not included in Altmann's edition of abstracts.³ What we can also use for study purposes, besides extant originals, are full-text copies (their number has reached 43 items so far), which show the phrasing of the charters in their full scope. To these, a total of 130 charters whose full text is known to us, we can add abstracts that are extant in various forms. Even though they don't contain the full range of the formulae, they provide us with at least some basic information about pledge amounts, recipients or pledged estates. However, it is thanks to a thorough study of the formulae of extant charters that we can better understand these abstracts. Namely, it is the register of the commission from the years 1453 and 1454, whose task was a revision of the deeds of pledge and property of chamber and church estates in the Kingdom of Bohemia. There was also a similar register for Moravia from 1459, however its manuscript has been lost and its text is preserved only in Emler's edition. Even more concise records are included in several manuscripts with abstracts from the Royal Register. These brief records are important to us because they make up our ideas about the total extent of the property pledged by Sigismund in the Czech lands.

However, pledges of either chamber or church estates were just one of the means to financially secure Sigismund's attempts to take up the Bohemian Throne and suppress Hussite opponents, which was becoming more expensive. When assessing the financial arrangement of these events we must also take into account other types of charters, mainly

various contracts of services, promissory notes and so on. The analysis in this paper will focus on pledge charters with the goal of realizing the probe into the financial aspects of deeds of pledge and to clarify the above questions by using several examples.

The first issue suggested in the introduction is the study of the monetary units that appear in the deeds of pledge of Sigismund of Luxembourg.⁴ First of all, there are the 'shocks' of Prague groschen, which, in Latin documents, are often referred to as the Bohemian groschen (*sexagenis grossorum Bohemicalium*), and less often as the Prague groschen (*sexagenis grossorum Pragensium*) or just groschen (*sexagenis grossorum*). We also come across the fact that currency needs to be more elaborate, as was, for example, the case of a Moravian recipient of a pledge charter Václav Lžička of Dubňany (*300 sexagenis grossorum monete et computi pragensis*). In the German form we come across the terms shocks of Bohemian groschen of the Prague coin or similar forms (*schok behemischer groschen prager münche, schok behemischer groschen, shock groschen prager münche, schok guter behemischer groschen prager münche*, and so on).

Regarding the indication of currency in Czech pledge charters, it is necessary to mention that in the case of Sigismund of Luxembourg, pledge charters composed in Czech are preserved from as early as the 1430s. Although extracts from the Royal Register contain sporadic evidence of the Czech version of deeds of pledge from earlier times, none exists in full text. Pledge amounts in this case are expressed in the shocks of fine silver Prague groschen (*v kopách grošuo v pražských stříbrných a dobrých*). The reason behind such a precise indication may be common usage; however, it rather appears that looming in the background was the fear of a poor quality coin, which was commonly in circulation in the Kingdom of Bohemia during those times of riots. Considering the fact that groschen almost disappeared from circulation at that time and were used mainly as a counting unit, we can suppose that the indication of the currency refers to the ideal and fixed value of the coin ensuring the certainty of equal profits (Castelin, 1953, p. 155; Vorel, 2004, pp. 68–69).

Besides the Prague groschen, the due amounts are less frequently expressed in Hungarian florins or Rhenish guilders or just florins. It is interesting that at least some of Sigismund's bills of debt explicitly mention the relationship between Rhenish guilders and groschen. These documents relate to the years 1420 and 1422 and state the rate of one Rhenish guilder for 18 groschen (in one case for 24).⁵

We are getting to the second question, which opens up the issue of quantifying the real or supposed value of performed services in

monetary terms. Given that the majority of pledge deeds relate to the issue of military service, compensation for damages and the like, we are coming to the field of war economy. The category of pledge deeds, to which attention will be paid in this context, is closely related to the new phenomenon of Sigismund's pledging policy, which is the direct pledge of church property. To prevent any misunderstandings, it is emphasised that such pledging of property is rigorously separated from the pledge of the monastic tax – in fact one type of chamber income (which was already common during the time of Sigismund's predecessors) and the direct pledge of goods of church institutions (Bárta, 2012).

We first come across such acts in Kutná Hora in August 1420, when Sigismund pledged the first monastic estates for large sums. These were the estates of the Nepomuk Monastery to Bohuslav and Krušina of Švamberk for 5,200 shocks groschen and also the estates of the Kladruby, Zderaz and Břevnov Monasteries to Vilém and Jan Švihovský of Rýzmburk for 1,271 shocks groschen (Altmann, 1896, p. 299, nos. 4238 and 4239). In this way he consolidated the loyalty of nobles with significant military contingents and at the same time revealed another source of funding the military campaign that was to follow. Gradually, he pledged other singular properties of church institutions to gentry in order to guarantee the due mercenary wage or to compensate for damage and he transformed this obliteration of debts into mercenary contracts, which were supposed to cover the cost to participants of the forthcoming military campaign in Prague.

Eberhard Windeck gives an impressive description of this trade in his chronicle, arguing that Bohemian lords didn't want to help Sigismund but wanted to get hold of the estates from the damaged monasteries. Sigismund's chancellor, George of Hohenlohe, reacted against this endeavour by refusing to bestow the majestic seal on this because it was against current practices (Altmann, 1893, p. 134; Bárta, 2012, p. 21). It was actually the Bohemian nobility who advised Sigismund to use church estates to ensure the amounts needed for the military and other services. There is not only the common formulation in Sigismund's pledge charters where he decided to pledge some estates with the council of the nobles, but also rare evidence documenting that some deeds of pledge were realized with the advice of the concrete persons (Bárta, 2015 in print). The main given argument for such an unprecedented step was the protection of the pledged estates.

What the situation was in the light of pledge charters is shown on a series of mercenary contracts joined with the deeds of pledge issued in Beroun on 28 October 1420. We know of nine original charters from

that day and another ten are known from the old abstracts. In all the original charters the recipient is compensated for suffered damage or due mercenary wage, and we learn some interesting details, such as that the two knights who were killed at Prague Castle, were compensated 22 shocks groschen. What is important, however, is that in addition to the compensation of liabilities, all these charters actually contain the mercenary contract that binds its recipient to serve with a certain number of knights during the defence of Prague Castle for 26 weeks. The calculation clearly corresponds to what, for example, Petr Čornej states in his work, namely that the service of one knight cost Sigismund weekly 30 groschen (Čornej, 2000, p. 437). It is interesting that where the mercenary services are contracted in Rhenish guilders the sum for one knight per week is the equivalent of only 24 groschen, which corresponds to the weekly payment for Polish knights of Sigismund Korybut (Čornej, 2000, p. 436).

In just these 19 deeds of pledge, over 350 knights were contracted in a single day and the total pledge amount, including coverage of older debts, reached almost 12,000 shocks groschen. Without exception, they were pledged church estates. If we consider that, for example, for the year 1412 the total annual income of the Royal Chamber in Bohemia is estimated to over 26,000 shocks groschen (Nový, 1992, p. 335; however such estimates are problematic), it was a breath-taking sum for a single day, which was not easy to cover. If we take into account the additional pledging in this period, the resulting sum reached was entirely beyond the limits of the Royal Chamber. Moreover, any unprecedented intervention in the church properties had to be regarded as exceptional and, to some extent, provisional. One way to opt out of debt was to wait for revenues from St George's Interest (all mercenaries were contracted till the Octave of St George). However, it rather appears that Sigismund was expecting a large amount of loot and confiscations of the property of the opposition.

After the collapse of the war plans from the years 1420 and 1421, Sigismund was forced to recall pledging of church property at the Imperial Diet in Nuremberg in August 1422 (Bárta, 2014). We do not know what impact this action had on the already pledged church property. However, it is important that in the following years and up until 1436, when Sigismund was close to the Bohemian Throne, he tried to respect this situation and did not pledge church property. He fell back on this means again in 1436 and 1437, when the pledging of church property became one of the means to fund the status quo (Bárta, 2012, p. 36; Bárta, 2014 p. 398). Specifically denominated amounts and debts

appear in the pledge charters less and less often and there is an expansion of general vague formulations that property is being pledged so that their holder could better fit the common good, intervene against intruders of peace and faithfully serve the king and so on.

The last issue that remains to be discussed here, is whether the value of pledged estates somehow corresponded to the pledge amounts. A rather clear ratio appears to be in the vifgage, when the revenue of assets usually accounted for about one tenth of the amount of the pledge sum and the pledge holder had to return estates back to the original owner after he had collected the due amount. In Sigismund's case this was in the vast majority of cases the mortgage. Therefore, the pledge holder was supposed to keep the goods and receive income from it until the time when Sigismund or a designated person paid him back the whole due amount in cash or offered him other goods of the similar value.⁶ This form was evidently much more convenient for the pledge holder. While searching for the answers as to why Sigismund chose for himself a seemingly less advantageous option, one suggested answer is that he hoped to be able quickly to take control of the situation and satisfy the pledge holders from other sources, for example from loot.

This is especially true for pledges of church estates, which were probably initially not supposed to have a more permanent character. So if we are to compare the income from the pledged church property, one possible source for the comparison are land and duty registers of the pre-Hussite period, which basically include incomes from particular estates (Emler, 1881). Four examples are chosen to illustrate this here.

The first is the pledge of the villages of the Břevnov Monastery – Svrkyně, Hole and Újezdec – to Ryneš of Žejdlíkovice in the amount of 150 shocks groschen (Altmann, 1896, p. 303, no. 4301). This charter is one of the above-mentioned from October 1420. If we look into the land register of Břevnov Monastery from 1406 (Emler, 1881, pp. 162–164; to Břevnov land register Čechura-Ryantová, 1992), we find that these three villages together were obliged to pay an annual tax of 72 shocks and 48 groschen, plus an addition of benefits in kind (chickens, eggs and so on), which are difficult to convert into monetary terms due to price fluctuations, however, they could be estimated at about 2–3 shocks groschen.⁷ Therefore Ryneš of Žejdlíkovice obtained for the due amount 150 shocks, the estates with half the revenue, so about 75 shocks groschen.

Other enquiries focus on the situation at the Chotěšov Monastery, from which were chosen another three examples (Bárta, 2012, for annual taxes Emler, 1881). The first is a pledge of the villages of Bítov and Dolní Sekyřany for Václav of Blatnice. These villages were pledged

to him for 150 shocks and their annual revenue was around 15 to 16 shocks. Then there is the pledge of the village of Lišina for Jan Gutštejn of Otovo for 150 shocks, with the annual revenue of the village ranging between 40 and 50 shocks groschen. If we pay further attention to the Chotěšov cases, we come across an interesting phenomenon: when Sigismund pledged some estates and the Prior Peter did a revision of these pledges in the 1430s and compensated the lenders, the result was that pledge holders owned a smaller and precisely assessed part of the estates for the same sum. What therefore happened, for example, was that after compensating the earlier pledge of the small town of Stod and the villages of Uherce and Přehýšov, Jaroslav Hradissye owned the small town of Stod for the pledge sum of 800 shocks groschen, the annual revenue of the town, according to the Chotěšov land register, being about 30 shocks groschen.

As can be seen from the above examples, the annual revenue of pledged estates with regard to the pledge sum varied from case to case. It seems that in some cases this could have been influenced by the negotiating position of the pledge holder, or by other individual circumstances or a particular situation. The question was whether, in turbulent times, estates would achieve the expected revenue and whether or not the pledge holder would be able to effectively exercise his rights resulting from his pledge holdings.

As mentioned above, the pledge charters from 1436–1437 reflected a slightly changed situation. They not only contain vaguely formulated duties, but it is also hard to postulate some relation between the value of the pledge estates and the pledging sum. The reason for this is probably a little different than in the years 1420–1422. The main function of the pledge charters in that earlier period had been to consolidate the situation in the Bohemian Kingdom after the Hussite Revolution. On 20 July 1436, Sigismund used his great privilege of estate liberty to order that all the holders of his pledge charter should bring these charters to his council, which should examine their validity. This order was repeated at the St Wenceslaus Land Diet in 1436 as well as through the findings of the Land Court in 1437 (Dřímál, 1969, p. 350).

The strict application of this order may have led to many conflicts, because a lot of real holders of the crown and church estates had no legal guarantee of their property. To secure the status quo Sigismund's chancery issued a number of pledge charters in the years 1436–1437. For former Sigismund's supporters it was an opportunity to gain reward for their services and the damages they had suffered. In case of his former enemies it was a way for Sigismund to buy their loyalty.

When trying to appreciate the pledge charters of Sigismund of Luxembourg, we recognize that they represent a highly interesting and multi-layered source. The previous interpretation was aimed at highlighting some of their financial aspects. An essential part of this analysis was devoted to the pledging of church estates. It is important to realize that while the pledging of chamber estates and incomes in the Czech lands was spread fairly evenly over the 1420s and 1430s, the pledging of church property came in two major waves, and always when Sigismund needed to solve some urgent financial situation. The first was between 1420 and 1422, when his intention was to fund an expensive army in the short term. The second came at the end of 1436 and the beginning of 1437 when pledging became a means to financially ensure the status quo and the loyalty of both parties.

The fact that those measures were supposed to be temporary and exceptional is supported by Sigismund's intention from the end of his reign to carry out the revision of pledged estates. This intention, however, was not accomplished until 1454, when the revision commission first sat. Sigismund succeeded only in the first step towards the restoration of crown property and chamber incomes, which was appointing a royal prosecutor, who was supposed to defend the king's interests regarding property that should devolve to the king. However none of his successors were able to restore the royal domain and renew the economic strength of church institutions, whose estates were being further pledged.⁸ This leads us to the conclusion that Sigismund's pledging policy, although still waiting for a thorough and complex analysis, represents a great qualitative as well as quantitative change, mainly in the approach to the exploitation of the property of church institutions in the Kingdom of Bohemia.

Notes

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1. Palacký (1850, pp. 350–354), the quote is based on Čelakovský (1890, p. 39).
2. It is mainly the edition of the records of the commission (Palacký, 1840, 1842), which should carry out the revision of the royal deeds of pledge in the years 1453–1454 (Beránek-Beránková, 1976). There is also similar register for Moravia from 1459 (edited by Emler, 1887). Further it is the edition of the rest of the Royal Register (Čelakovský, 1890, pp. 100–131) and the reconstruction of the Royal Register of Bohemia (Sedláček, 1914), which was later further extended (Pelikán, 1946). We know about five volumes of Sigismund's Royal

- Register of Bohemia but four of them have been preserved only in the form of short abstracts from the end of 15th century and the beginning of 16th century. Accessing the Sigismund's written material within *Regesta Imperii* was important as well (Altmann 1896, 1900), and see note 3.
3. The research of the pledge charters is one of the main tasks of *Regesta Imperii*-branch office Brno, where the new edition of abstracts of Sigismund's charters and letters from the Czech archives is at the stage of preparation (see *Regesta*, 2014 and Elbel, 2015 in print). The study copies of all the pledge charters as well as of other sources are available at this branch office. For the editions of the described sources see note 2 above.
 4. For the coinage and monetary units of this period compare for example Castelin (1953, pp.154–204), Castelin (1973, pp. 31–42). The quoted examples in the following text are from Sigismund's pledge charters (see note 3). For the charter for Václav Lžička of Dubňany see Elbel (2012, p. 156, no. 97).
 5. The rate of one florin for 18 groschen is mentioned in the following charters: Altmann (1896, p. 362, no. 5137; p. 364, no. 5162, p. 367, no. 5229). For the rate of one florin for 24 groschen see Altmann (1896, p. 368, no. 5234). All the mentioned charters are preserved only in the form of abstract in the records of the commission from 1453/1454 (see note 2).
 6. To the legal aspects of pledging of the royal property compare Kapras (1903, pp. 47–49); to the clauses of Sigismund's pledge charters Bárta (2013, pp. 118–120).
 7. For prizes of selected commodities see for example Sejbál (1997, p. 138) and to year 1422 Vorel (2004, p. 69).
 8. It represents one of the steps in the long time tendency described in the conception of the transition from the domain state to the tax state formulated by Josef Schumpeter and further developed by Austrian school of economic history represented for example by Theodor Mayer; see Mayer (1952), Petersen (1975), Sterneck (2004, pp 581–582).

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6

The Pledge Policy of King Sigismund of Luxembourg in Hungary (1387–1437)

János Incze

6.1 Introduction

King Sigismund of Luxembourg – Emperor Charles IV's second son – is known in Hungarian historiography as a ruler who struggled with recurrent financial difficulties and it was only possible to satisfy his financial hunger by complementing the ordinary revenues of the kingdom with extraordinary ones (Engel, 2001, p. 227). His contemporaries observed that he was often short of money. Even his biographer Eberhard Windecke noted down some interesting stories that were related to the king's financial problems. Windecke claims that once, when Sigismund visited England, his host, Henry V, gave him jewels which Windecke himself pledged shortly afterwards at Sigismund's order. Sigismund not only pawned the royal gifts, but he was also unwilling to redeem them (Altmann, 1893, pp. 80–81). Moreover, according to the same author, Sigismund was accused of irresponsible spending by his brother, Wenceslaus, King of Bohemia (1378–1419) and the Romans (1376–1400), because he pawned and sold various silver and gold jewels (Altmann, 1893, pp. 57–58). A letter written by an envoy of Mantua in Hungary to his lord in 1395 sheds light on the state of the financial affairs that he experienced at the royal court. According to the letter when wealthy Italian merchants came to Hungary, they were usually directed to the royal court. There, with their capital, they could easily manage almost everything and obtain royal charters, too, if they were willing to give loans to the king, but when the time came for repayment, they were not let into the court and could not regain their money.¹ The account of these narrative sources might be considered biased, but the fact is that

during his reign Sigismund levied extraordinary taxes at least nine times (Engel, 2003, p. 430; Mályusz, 1965, pp. 55–82), imposed heavy taxes on the church, collected the revenues of the bishoprics that he did not fill (Tóth C., 2012, pp. 102–118), and had countless loans and pledge transactions (Engel, 1994, p. 182), all suggests that information provided by these sources might not be wrong.

Probably one of Sigismund's favourite fundraising methods that provided him with a steady flow of extraordinary income was putting royal properties in pledge. Indeed, his reign in Hungary was so closely connected with pledging that his rule started with such a transaction and almost ended with another. In the unstable political situation that characterized the period after the death of King Louis of Anjou, Sigismund could secure his claim to the throne only with the use of military power, provided by his cousins Margraves Jobst and Procopius of Moravia. He could not meet the expenses of this military intervention, so instead he pledged the north-western Hungarian territories between the Vág (Váh) and Danube rivers to his cousins.¹ Ultimately, he recovered the western Hungarian territories but only by exchanging them for his family inheritance, Brandenburg. The mere fact that, to recover these territories he had to pledge others, expresses emphatically the role of pledges in his rule.² Fifty years after his ascension to the throne, a single day before his death, the seriously ill ruler did not renounce his favourite fundraising method, and issued probably his last contract of pledge in Znojmo (DL 63135).

In the Late Middle Ages pledging was a widespread and frequently used method of monarchs to increase their regular revenues and was especially popular in the Holy Roman Empire (Zmora, 2002, pp. 42–45).³ Despite the fact that it was also highly favoured and practised to a great extent in Central Europe,⁴ Hungarian scholars have paid little attention so far to this phenomenon; Hungarian historiography still has to produce comprehensive works about pledging. There are only a few works touching upon the topic of pledging in medieval Hungary. Only István Bariska (2007) has written an entire book dedicated to a complex case of pledging. The topic has not escaped the attention of legal historians. However, their works provide only general information; they do not try to specify in which century what type of pledging was practised, and they do not emphasize the particularities of royal pledging.⁵ No wonder that our knowledge about Sigismund's pledging is limited – in spite of the fact that probably his pledging practice has been the most studied. Today nobody can tell precisely how many deeds of pledge Sigismund issued during his long, 50-year reign, although there have been several attempts to collect all the data about these.

In 1916, however, Antal Áldásy had remarked that the king's financial policy was one of the most interesting features of his domestic policy (Áldásy, 1916, p. 301), nevertheless, Sigismund had a bad reputation in the early historical studies; charges of lavishness and wastefulness were just as common in these works as in the medieval narratives quoted above. For instance, the renowned synthesis of Hungarian history edited by Sándor Szilágyi (1895, p. 409) claims that Sigismund did not take the problems of governing seriously; rather he spent his time having fun. He was considered a monarch with bad financial management abilities whose loans and pledges were countless. Emma Lederer was the first scholar to shed light on the Hungarian pledges of King Sigismund (Lederer, 1932), a topic mainly unknown until the publication of Lederer's book on the pledging of the Spiš region (Slovakia, Szepesség/Zips). This transaction owes its importance to the long period of the pledge, since the region given in pledge to the King of Poland in 1412 returned to Hungary only in 1772 (Ilyefalvi, 1907; Chalupecký, 1997, pp. 79–89; Ruciński, 2009, pp. 342–349). In his work about Sigismund's defence policy, József Deér tried to rehabilitate the king by stating that his countless pledges were spent on the defence of the kingdom (Deér, 1936, p. 89). Just like Lederer, Deér strived to calculate the amount of credit Sigismund accumulated throughout his reign, and later his work was continued by Gyula Rázsó. Rázsó, like Deér, studied Sigismund's pledges in the context of war financing, and collected further information from the sources about the king's pledges and loans (Rázsó, 1962, pp. 167–169). Albeit, some other scholars also touched upon Sigismund's pledges (Mályusz, 1990, pp. 33, 165, 190; Bak, 2010, and Engel, 2001, pp. 227–228), the findings of the aforementioned three historians are the most significant contributions to the topic, even though two of these works were published in the 1930s and Gyula Rázsó's article in 1962. Partly as a result of these works, the assessment of Sigismund's financial policy has changed radically through the decades; especially Pál Engel has played a major role in this process. The king is not blamed any more for irresponsible financial policy, rather he is considered an intelligent ruler who was ahead of his time and who understood early that state finances do not resemble household finances, therefore he could spend more than his income would have allowed (Engel, 1994, p. 182; Engel, 2003, p. 430).

6.2 The sources of Sigismund's pledging

The present study aims to present the characteristics and legal features of King Sigismund's pledging in Hungary and to provide a general overview

of his pledging practice on the basis of the available sources. The scarce surviving archival materials make the research on Sigismund's pledges complicated and it requires the use of a variety of sources that are related to these transactions in various ways. On the basis of the available source material it seems that a concluded pledge transaction usually resulted in the issuance of three documents with different characters.⁶ First, there was the contract⁷ of the transaction where the details of the contracting parties' agreement were written down; second there was the letter of institution (*litterae introductoriae*) which in fact was a royal order to the chapter or convent of authentication in charge of the land in question to institute the pledgee in the pledged domain. The third document was another royal command in which the ruler informed all the inhabitants of the pledged lands about the transaction, and ordered them to obey in every way the pledgee and his men and to pay the taxes to them. Only in the most fortunate cases are all three documents of a pledging preserved. It is more typical that only one of them has survived, however, there are cases where none of these documents are extant and only indirect information is available about certain transactions.

The information in the above-mentioned types of source does not provide equally valuable information about the pledge agreements. The contracts contain the most detailed accounts of the pledges, such as the royal justification of the reasons for the pledge, the exact sum of the transaction, information about the pledgee and finally the date and place of the concluded contract. The letter of institution and the order requiring full obedience generally lack essential data, in most cases even the monetary sum of the transaction is not given, not to mention other relevant details of the agreement, taking into account that neither the chapter or convent of authentication nor the inhabitants of the pledged property had to be acquainted with the precise terms of the agreement to fulfil their tasks. In cases when none of the documents closely related to the pledging were preserved, other sources such as testaments (Fejér, 1843, p. 436), letters of donation (DL 100318), letters of domain divisions (Pesty, 1896, p. 629; DL 11942), documents about further pledging or redemption of the same property (DL 248256, 88125) can be taken into consideration. As a matter of fact, sporadic data about pledging can be found in almost all kinds of sources that are linked with the royal domains.

Even if royal account books and registers containing data about royal pledges were not preserved, a document of a similar character has survived and contains vital information about Sigismund's pledges (Engel, 1977, pp. 194–196; DL 13137). It is believed that this undated

text entitled *Consignatio castrorum pro honore Sigismundi regis datorum*⁸ is a later, 17th century copy comprising data from the end of 1437 and presumably it was compiled around 1439. Dating the list to 1439 is based on the fact that the text mentions Sigismund as being deceased and Albrecht from the House of Habsburg as the king of Hungary (ibid. DL 13137). The document lists the royal castles, towns, and domains, including those that had been pledged. The importance of the list as a source is demonstrated by the fact that sometimes it is the only evidence proving that certain properties were still held in pledge at the end of Sigismund's reign, such as the pledging of the castle of Branč (Slovakia, Berencs) to Pongráč of Szentmiklós before the year 1437 (Engel, 1977, p. 97).

6.3 Pledging and its general conditions

The author of the compilation of the Hungarian laws and customs, Stephen Werbőczy (c.1458–1541)⁹, wrote that: 'pledging is the temporary transfer of his own property right to another's use, out of necessity'¹⁰ and also is 'the retention of the right of another, with the gathering of its fruits and demanding the capital sum'.¹¹ In other words, pledging was a financial transaction in which the pledger transferred the pledge object to the creditor for a certain sum of money without losing the property rights of it. According to the general phrasing of Sigismund's contracts of pledge, the creditors lent money at the king's request hoping that he would return it at some point,¹² and until the time of repayment he gave them royal properties as security for these sums.¹³

The terms and general conditions under which the royal properties were put in pledge show great variety, however, generally a few paragraphs were almost compulsory for every contract of Sigismund's pledge. One of them was the legal institution of warranty. Sigismund assumed the responsibility not only for himself, but on behalf of his successors as well, to protect the recipients of the pledge and their heirs in their newly acquired lands.¹⁴ The warranty obliged him to prove the rights of the pledgees to the pledged estates in case a claimant appeared contesting their rights to the properties, and he also had to cover the expenses of a possible law suit in which these properties were involved. If the pledger was not able to fulfil his warranty, the pledge holder had to be compensated with another property of similar value.¹⁵ Another regular element of the agreements was Sigismund's promise that neither he nor his successors would take back the pledges until they had paid back the initial credit advanced to him.¹⁶ These promises of Sigismund, made on

his own and his successor's behalf, were common in the contracts of pledge, and just as he had to keep the terms of his predecessors' pledges, so too must his successors. The redemption clause was the other indispensable element of the pledging contracts as it made it possible for the pledger to recover the pledge. Not only Sigismund, but also his successors had the right to reclaim the pledged property at any time if they repaid the loan.

The pledge was inherited automatically by the pledgee's heirs on their death, likewise the debt of the ruler was inherited by his successors; the death of the pledger did not cause redemption or any kind of changes of rights. The provisions settled in the contract were valid over the long term; all the heirs of both contracting parties had to obey them. Changes in the conditions of pledging could have been carried out only by modifying the contract. Besides inheritability, the pledgees could also have the right of transferability over these estates. Transferring the pledge was possible for the pledger too; usually in Sigismund's pledging practice this happened by making further pledges of the property. Considering how many particular conditions could exist for transferring (in all forms) and recovering the pledge and how complex these could be, it is necessary to explore these issues in detail. Consequently, in the following part of the paper I will focus on these problems.

6.4 The transfer of the pledge

The recovery of the pledged royal domains happened, in most cases, through transferring them further. However, the right of transferability was not a royal privilege or a specific right of the pledger only; sometimes the pledgees were invested with such authority too. Taking something in pledge did not mean that from the start of the contract the pledge could be transferred by the pledge holders to anyone they want. To gain the right of transferability the ruler's consent and special permission was needed, as he was the owner of the properties and it was his authority to dispose of them.

Among Sigismund's most peculiar pledgees was a certain hunter called Michalko, who for his loyal services – valued at 70 florins – received in pledge a royal village with the restriction that neither he nor his heirs could sell, alienate or pledge the domain without royal permission.¹⁷ Another case provides further evidence of how important royal consent was for making further pledges. Mościc of Stęszew received in pledge the royal castle of Šintava (Slovakia, Sempete) and for his urgent need¹⁸ he turned up at the royal court and petitioned the king¹⁹ to let him

pledge the castle further to another nobleman in accordance with the kingdom's customs.²⁰

Gaining royal authorization to further pledging the domains did not necessarily mean that it referred by default to all the properties included in the original contract. In a transaction in which the market town of Keszthely and the castles of Rezi and Pölöske were involved, Sigismund granted the pledgees the right of transferring the possessions but he specified in the contract that only one of the castles and the town could be pledged further.²¹ Seemingly there was another restriction regarding the transferability of pledges. In the pledging contract of the castle of Boldogkő Sigismund gave permission to the pledge receiver to further transfer the castle to people he prefers, however, these should be among the faithful subjects of the king.²² This specific constraint is clarified in another agreement where Sigismund stipulated that the pledgees during the pledge period can further pledge the royal property only to the inhabitants of the kingdom, excluding foreigners in this way.²³

A different change in the possession of the pledge happened when the primary pledge holder died and the heirs inherited the domains. The contracts were concluded with the condition that properties were delivered as a pledge not only to the creditors but to their heirs as well. This clause of inheritability was a basic element of the pledge contracts and entitled the pledge receiver's heirs to inherit the pledged domain with all of its appurtenant lands and inherent rights. For the royal domains – deposited as pledge by King Sigismund – the right of inheritability sometimes could result in decades of private ownership. The previously mentioned pledging of the Spiš region is the most famous example of such long-lived pledges of the king, however, the case of the tax of the city of Bardejov (Slovakia, Bártfa) is also worth noting. The tax pledge by Sigismund in 1412 was still held in pledge almost a hundred years later, after several attempts at redemption (Incze, 2013, pp. 83–95. Štefánik and Lukačka, 2010, pp. 87–88). Besides the usual way of inheriting the domains it was even possible to bequeath the pledges if the ruler granted such a privilege to the pledge holder. The Archbishop of Esztergom György Pálóci secured that during the pledging he could bequeath the pledged royal domains to whomever he chose, without the clause described above specifying that these could not be foreigners, furthermore he could bequeath them even to any church he favours.²⁴ Probably one of the most agreeable bequests of pledges for the king was when he himself was named as the beneficiary of a last Will. John Albeni bishop of Zagreb, who previously held in pledge the royal city of Gradec

(Zagreb) (Škrebilin, 2013, p. 6), in his last will bequeathed the city to the king and remitted his debts.²⁵

During the long reign of King Sigismund in Hungary it happened frequently that the original pledge holders died and their family inherited the pledge. Intriguingly, in such cases Sigismund sometimes demanded additional payments from the relatives of the deceased pledgee; if they wanted to keep the pledge, additional financial contributions were required. The widow of Péter Cudar, former Ban of Slavonia, had to pay 2,000 florins at the king's demand²⁶ in addition to the 8,838 florins which her spouse had held in pledge on the castle of Boldogkő. This was not an exceptional case; it was not even relevant who pledged the royal property initially; Sigismund could find a way to collect some extra revenues. So he dealt with the widow of Stephan Frankopan, permitting her to retain in pledge the castle of Steničnjak (Croatia, Sztenicsnyák) – which her husband had received in pledge from King Louis – only by paying an extra 8,500 florins, a sum almost as high as the initial sum of the pledging, 10,000 florins (DL 34052; Thallóczy, 1910, p. 131).

On the basis of these cases it should not be necessarily concluded that these instances are a sign of some kind of a 'widow tax', that is, after the death of the head of the family and the initial pledgee, the king tried to squeeze more money from the unfortunate family. Even if financial consideration could often be behind Sigismund's actions,²⁷ additional payments for the royal domains in pledge were not solely requested from the pledgees' widows. For the king, depositing royal domains in pledge offered promising opportunities to request money above the initial sum of the transaction. At the same time this represented a great risk for the pledge holders that if they did not fulfil the king's demands they could lose the pledge, as they lost it presumably from time to time when Sigismund gave the pledge to someone other than the initial pledgee. The Rožmberks had to pay three times in addition to the original sum advanced, for which they received in pledge the castle of Čeklis (Slovakia, Cseklész) (DL 11936, 12410, 12412, 12919), in this way the initial sum pledged of 1,500 florins increased to 5,290.²⁸ This was not extraordinary, palatine Miklós Garai, in the time span of a month, lent to the king almost as much as he had originally when taking in pledge the castle of Komárno (Slovakia, Komárom). In June 1422 Garai lent Sigismund 6,840 florins and in July he added 6,160 to the initial sum. Therefore Sigismund acknowledged that the whole amount of debt that he owed to Garai was 13,000 florins (DL 87960, 11231).

Elemér Mályusz, the most famous Hungarian researcher on the Sigismund period and the promoter of the Cartulary of the Sigismundian

Era, considered these additional payments to be the result of the king's powerlessness to demand the real price of these estates at the time of the original contract. According to his view, only in the second part of Sigismund's reign, were there no more underpayments in the royal pledging (Mályusz, 1990, pp. 88–89). Even if there is no space to elaborate on this question in detail, it can be noted that loans raised on the basis of pledging were already present in the first part of Sigismund's rule. In 1396 he received a 2,000 florin loan in addition to the 8,838 florins for which he pledged the castle of Boldogkő (DL 8170). A year later, in another case he demanded 2,800 florins for a few previously pledged royal domains situated in Fejér and Somogy counties (DL 100279). Whether only in the second half of his rule or not, Sigismund definitely could get sums close to the probable value of the pledged estates. In this respect the already-mentioned instance of pledging the castle of Šintava is illustrative. Mościc of Sęszew had pledged the castle for a further 10,500 florins after receiving it in pledge from the king. Sigismund regained the castle somehow, and deposited it again in pledge for 10,600 florins. The king was able not only to collect the same amount of money that Mościc did, but he even got a bit more. It is difficult to say that Sigismund was always able to demand the real value of the royal domains, since usually there are no data on their actual worth. However, further research could probably shed some light on this question. The case of castle of Šintava was a fortunate one because the pledging of it by the ruler and by Mościc provides a good basis of comparison.

6.5 Recovering the pledge

The clause of redemption entitled the pledger to regain the property delivered in pledge at any time once he paid back the loan and obligated the pledge holder to return the property without any opposition.²⁹ This was also valid if the pledge was inherited or transferred, in a similar way the persons who had the contract had to hand over the properties to the pledger at the time of repayment.³⁰ It was not characteristic in the contracts to include the pledger's obligation to inform in advance the pledgee about his intention of redeeming the properties, although occasionally such cases are attested.³¹

Normally King Sigismund and his successors could recover the pledges, although it was somewhat exceptional if anybody other than the rulers could do it. Probably in the last pledging of Sigismund, a rather unusual clause was included in the contract that gave authorization to redeem the pledges not only to the king and his successors but to the barons of

the kingdom too.³² In the unstable political context the matter of the succession was put into question, presumably that is why the barons were included among the potential redeemers of the pledges (Mályusz, 1994, pp. 120–127). The right of redemption was transferable (Landwehr, 1967, p. 386) to anyone the pledger preferred, and it was the pledger's his authority as the owner of the property to discuss the terms under which it would be recovered. In 1392 Miklós Garai was entrusted by Sigismund with recovering the two pledged castles of Kőszeg and moreover the king supplied him with some further instructions regarding the redemption. The instructions prescribed that if the pledge holder was not satisfied with the offered money; Garai should not start negotiating but should send him to the royal court. It was in the ruler's authority to discuss the terms of the redemption and changes to the contract if they were needed, because he was the pledger and one of the contracting parties. Garai had no involvement in the original agreement and consequently no rights either.

Sometimes there were restrictions regarding the redemption of pledges, such as assuring the pledgee that the properties would not be redeemed during their lifetime.³³ Temporal restrictions as this 'lifelong pledging' or denoting the duration of pledging to a set number of years was not common in Sigismund's pledging practice and only some rare occasions are recorded (DL 71794, 63121, 100279). The reason why Sigismund did not prefer to have such transactions lies in the fact such pledging was disadvantageous for him since if he did not repay the borrowed sum on the deadline, he would have lost his property rights over the pledges and would have had to donate them to the pledge holders.³⁴ In the case of redemption, the pledged property could be recovered by paying back the credit in the same currency.³⁵ During the pledge the value of pledging remained constant, it neither grew nor decreased.³⁶ The sum of the pledge increased only when the pledgee invested money in the pledges, such as refurbishing run-down castles or making new constructions; obviously these expenses were covered by the pledger. When Sigismund recovered the castle of Somló from pledge, he promised to the former pledgee that he would refund the castle's costs of reparation after he had been informed verbally or in writing about the extent of them.³⁷ Seldom was it written into the contract that Sigismund or his successors will reimburse the loan wherever the pledge holders wanted.³⁸

The recovering of Sigismund's pledged properties shows a somewhat unified picture; commonly it happened by reimbursing the creditor, cases in which the incomes from the pledge itself were used to redeem

it were not typical. So atypical is the transaction in which Sigismund put in pledge the castle of Kittsee (Austria, Köpcsény) and the village of Rusovce (Slovakia, Oroszvár) with their thirtieth customs. According to the agreement the castle and the village had to be returned to the king when the 9,000 florins initially lent had been recovered by the creditor from the revenues of the thirtieth customs.³⁹ In King Sigismund's pledging practice, in most of the cases the redemption took form not in the genuine sense of the term – that is by paying off the debt – but by pledging further the royal properties.⁴⁰ Often once a royal castle or domain had been deposited as pledge, this was only the beginning of a series of pledges. The pledging of the castle of Tătika is a good example. The castle became royal property in 1397 and soon after, around the turn of the century, was put into pledge for the first time. At the end of Sigismund's reign it was still held in pledge, having been involved in seven consecutive pledge transactions involving numerous pledgees.⁴¹

The further pledging of the royal properties represented a good opportunity for the king to gain even more money from the pledging, since from time to time the new pledge holders had to pay sums in addition to the initial sum of the transaction. Péter, Imre, and László of Pelsőc received in pledge the castles and market towns of Filakovo and Jelšava (Slovakia, Fülek, Jolsva) with their appurtenant lands for 2,000 florins that they lent to Sigismund,⁴² but in order to be instituted in these they first had to redeem them from the queen who held these properties for 5,707 florins.⁴³ The terms of the contract did not give room for any kind of objection against the further pledging of the royal properties; usually the pledgee had to accept the transfer of properties that previously he or she held. On 4 March 1436, an agreement was reached between King Sigismund and György Pálóci the Archbishop of Esztergom about the fate of the royal villages of Dejtár and Patak. On the basis of the agreement the archbishop for a sum of 1,000 florins became entitled to redeem the settlements from Peter Reichel of Machalovce (Mahálfalva) (DF 248255). On the very same day two other charters were issued, in one of them Sigismund informed Peter Reichel about the agreement he had negotiated with the archbishop,⁴⁴ ordering Reichel that when he got his money back he immediately had to hand over the settlements to the archbishop or to his men without any resistance or objection.⁴⁵ The other document was addressed to all the tenant peasants and inhabitants of the two settlements saying that they had to obey to the archbishop and his servants and to pay them the taxes and revenues.⁴⁶

In Sigismund's pledging practice, swapping and seizing the domains were the other preferred ways of recovering them. By an exchange of

domains the new properties were likewise given in pledge and the swap did not affect the value of the original transaction.⁴⁷ Seizing the royal domains was the most drastic way of regaining them and also the most rarely practised by the king. A known case is when Sigismund took back the market town of Segesd from the widow of Miklós Zámbo – the former master of the treasury – on the basis of a charge of fraudulent misuse of funds.⁴⁸ A similarly unusual and at the same time unparalleled way of recovering the pledged properties was to take them back by force. The castle of Devín (Slovakia, Dévény) held in pledge by the Hering Lessel was besieged on Sigismund's order (ZsO.IV.662), however, the castle was not given up, and at the end Lessel surrendered it only for money.⁴⁹

6.6 The interest of the contractual sides in the pledging

Why Sigismund had to transfer royal properties to raise money or how he spent the capital gained through such transactions are questions rarely answered by contracts and agreements. Commonly, the royal arguments about the need of the pledging allude to the king's or the kingdom's great need⁵⁰ and its progress and advantage.⁵¹ However, there are cases, when it was clearly indicated what Sigismund spent the borrowed money on. Financing the costs of military campaigns are the most frequent of such instances where the protection of the kingdom against its enemies is mentioned repeatedly, sometimes without specifying who these were.⁵² Mainly Ottomans⁵³ and Hussites⁵⁴ were regarded as the primary threat in the pledge contracts, as probably the credit needed for war financing and obtained through pledging was mainly spent against them. In some cases, the contracts of pledge elaborate in detail on the merit of the prospective pledge holder; among these one can find even shorter descriptions of certain military expeditions that were led by the pledgee or in which he took part. A charter of pledge from the year 1435 informs that Matko Talovac lead a successful military campaign in southern Bosnia against Ottomans allied with Bosnians, and he managed to capture the castles of Jajca, Bočac and Vranduk (DL 34067; Mályusz, 1980, p. 553).

Occasionally Sigismund covered the expenses of recruiting soldiers through pledging. In such instances an agreement was concluded about the number of soldiers that the pledgee had to recruit and how much Sigismund will pay for their wages. John Hunyadi, the famous general, with his brother, also called John, recruited an armed force for Sigismund to serve for three months for which the king had to pay them 1,250 florins through pledging.⁵⁵ Additionally, the money often involved in

the pledge transaction was not a standard loan, but arrears of the office holder's salary, which Sigismund tried to pay through pledging.⁵⁶ Besides war financing and paying the office holder's salary, there is occasional information about the cost of maintaining and refurbishing certain royal castles or about the expenses of construction. This was the case of the castellans of the castle of Čachtice (Slovakia, Csejte), who received in pledge the castle against their expenses for the upkeep of the castle.⁵⁷ Another case can be linked to construction in Bratislava (Slovakia, Pozsony, Pressburg). In the last decades of his reign Sigismund wanted to move his residence from Buda to Bratislava. Therefore intensive construction was carried out on the castle beside the city. In a charter of pledge Sigismund borrowed money *ad labores nostros Posonienses* which fits quite well with this period of construction, since the document was issued in 1430 (DL 12297).⁵⁸

These sometimes laconic pieces of information about the pledge contracts are the only reliable data on how Sigismund spent the money from the pledging, since it is not common for sources of pledging information other than the contracts to contain data about the spending of the money accumulated through pledging. In other cases, the lack of such data means that we can only make assumptions about the purpose of the pledging on the basis of the political events happening around the date of concluding the pledge contract.

If the contracts contain scarce information about how the king used the proceeds of the loan, they are even more silent about from where the pledge receivers obtained the money they lent to the ruler. Only in exceptional cases are there some hints in the charters with regard to this. The pledging of the castle of Komárno with its belongings to palatine Miklós Garai is quite uncommon, because the document of the agreement says that palatine lent the same money that the king had previously allocated to him. The charter informs us that Garai had started to set up his residence in the royal court with the financial support of the ruler, who granted him the tax of the Jews, and the tax of the towns of Buda and Pest. The king borrowed not only from these sums but also from Garai's salary and from the money he had given to him for the upkeep of the castle of Buda.⁵⁹

The reason why creditors were willing to receive, in pledge, royal properties is clearer than where they found the money for it. Their interest in being involved in a royal pledge transaction lies in the fact that during the pledge period they were entitled to collect all the revenues and usufructs of the pledge,⁶⁰ of course without depleting its resources (Reichert, 1993, p. 341). This extra financial gain effectively represented

the interest rate of the transactions. Occasionally, there was a possibility to collect more than the usual revenues of the pledge in the form of extraordinary taxes. Sigismund could authorize the pledge receivers that when he levied an extraordinary tax on the pledged royal estates, they could in turn levy it on the tenant peasants and inhabitants living there, though this tax had to be a moderate one to prevent desolation of these settlements.⁶¹ Besides the revenues, the pledge receivers had extended jurisdiction in the pledged domains⁶² and, as mentioned above, they had authority over all the inhabitants of pledged estates.

The pledgees' jurisdiction and the incomes that they could collect were determined by the initial pledge agreement but these could be extended further through other agreements; it was in the king's power to decide the amount of revenues from the royal property and the degree of authority over these that he wanted to transfer through the pledging. Consequently, the king's necessity was probably the primary factor determining the terms of the agreement and under which conditions properties were transferred. It is no wonder that Sigismund retained certain revenues of the pledged estates for himself, as he did with the pledging of the town of Debrecen. The market town was deposited in pledge with all of its tax, incomes, profits, rights and jurisdiction, but the revenues of the royal salt chamber remained in royal possession.⁶³ Furthermore the king prohibited the pledge holder, his men or relatives from levying tax on the salt brought in to or out from the town.⁶⁴ Sigismund could proceed in a similar way with the jurisdiction conveyed to the creditor as he did with the revenues. In the case of pledging the town of Bardejov, the pledgee was authorized to collect the yearly tax of the town that was previously paid to the royal chamber, along with the New Year's gift called *munera strennalia* or *encenia* (Incze, 2013, p. 91). The pledge holder's authority did not go beyond collecting the taxes; he was not allowed to intervene in the town's autonomy and internal affairs.

On another occasion the king's orders stipulated actions contrary to those cases mentioned above, where instead of de-limiting the pledgee's jurisdiction, Sigismund expanded it significantly. John Frankopan took in pledge the castle of Rmanj (Bosnia Herzegovina, Ormán) with the seat of the administration of justice belonging to the castle⁶⁵. The authority transferred to the pledge holder could extend to the jurisdiction of the churches as well. The patronage right of the churches belonging to the pledged royal estates gave the pledgee the right to be involved in the election of the parish priests of these possessions. Such authority was accorded to Herman II, Count of Celje, Sigismund's father-in-law

when the castles of Čakovec and Štrigova (Croatia, Csáktornya, Sztrigó) were pledged to him.⁶⁶

6.7 Conclusion

As the present study has shown, King Sigismund's deeds of pledge do not follow a uniform pattern during his half-century-long reign. Instead, the terms and conditions under which the royal properties were put in pledge could vary greatly.⁶⁷ Only a few common clauses were present in almost all transactions, (such as the warranty, right of redemption, inheritability); besides these, the rest of the conditions of the pledging were the results of negotiations between the contracting parties. Bearing in mind that the details of the negotiations were not written down in the sources, at this distance in time it is difficult to tell why such major differences occurred among the terms of Sigismund's pledging. Nevertheless, the differences show that these financial transactions were not strictly regulated; consequently, he could even pledge the same property under different conditions.⁶⁸

Apparently, on the one hand, the agreement depended greatly on Sigismund, since the objects of the pledging were royal properties, therefore he had the final word in deciding what will be pledged, and with how much degree of authority the pledgee would be invested. He had a large room for manoeuvre in negotiating the terms of the pledging; he could have kept certain revenues for the royal chamber if it was more advantageous than transferring these to the pledgee. Also, he was empowered to recover the pledges and he had the means to, by swapping domains, or by repaying the loan. Probably, when he needed capital urgently he was more willing to grant concessions regarding the terms of pledging, as most likely happened in cases when his right to recover the properties was limited to a set number of years, and failing to recover these would have resulted in losing them. On the other hand, the pledgees also played an important role in negotiating the terms of the transactions, regarding the fact that they provided the money that the ruler needed. Obviously they would not have agreed to the terms of a pledging from which they would have not profited.

Due to the diversity of the pledging provisions and lack of regulation, any attempt at integrating these into a unified system is problematic; the terms of a contract were often valid only for that particular instance. Consequently, instead of a coherent system of provisions, the available written documents provide historians an insight in a series of particular cases.

Notes

1. *cum hic nulla datur expeditio nisi certis a quibus rex mutuo petit et sunt italici mercatores, hii vero cum pecunias portant subito introducuntur ad regem et datur ipsis de verbis et sigillis celerima expeditio dum possit tantummodo tangere nummos. Cum venit postmodum terminus restituendi ipsis postea introitus et expeditio denegatur.* Thallóczy (1905, p. 390) For more details see Mályusz (1990, pp. 18–26), Süttő (2003, pp. 94–95, 133–135), Hoensch (1996, pp. 55–58), Engel (2001, pp. 196–199).
2. In a contract of pledge from January 1388 Sigismund argued that he pledged because: ...*pro quibusdam nostris et regni nostri incomoditatibus ad praesens imminetibus et debitis quibus Bohemis pro liberationem et redemptionem castrorum per ipsos occupatorum de presenti obligamur*... DL 96613.
3. For the amount of pledges of the German emperors see Landwehr (1967, pp. 454–455). According to Winfried Reichert's calculation the pledges of the counts of Luxemburg reached a total of 638,000 florins between the years 1250–1354. Reichert (1993, p. 353).
4. For the pledges in Poland see Ludwig 1984, for Sigismund's pledges in Bohemia see Moravec (1985, pp. 89–175).
5. Among the most relevant works there are Ágoston (1906), Eckhart (2000, pp. 312–313) (the book was first published in 1946); Béli (1999, pp. 85–88, 109–111).
6. For example, DL 63135, 63134, 63136.
7. This source, to which I am referring as contracts of pledge, were not contracts in the genuine meaning of the word. These documents were issued usually by the ruler according to his own expectations, but it is still appropriate to call them contracts because they contain the clauses and provisions of the transaction that the contractual sides had to keep.
8. According to Pál Engel (1977, pp. 194–196) this title is a later addition to the text and was given through the shortening of the first two lines of the lists. This shows clearly that the authors of the title misinterpreted the document's content.
9. Werbőczy was a Hungarian statesman and jurist. His compilation of the Hungarian laws and customs, entitled *Tripartitum*, was first published in 1517. Even if Werbőczy's work was published a century after Sigismund's death, his statements are still applicable to Sigismund's time, because he noted old customs and laws which probably were the same at the time of Sigismund's reign. For Werbőczy and his work see Rady 2003.
10. ...*impignoratio est juris proprii necessitate cogente temporalis ad utendum alteri concessio*.... First part, chapter eighty-one. Werbőczy (2006, pp. 158–159) (translation quoted).
11. ...*impignoratio est juris alieni, cum fructuum perceptione ac capitalis summae repetitione*... Werbőczy (2006, pp. 158–159).
12. ...*maiestati nostre accommodarunt et nomine certi mutui ac sub spe restitutionis dederunt*... DL 86789.
13. ...*nos volentes eosdem...de rehibitione huiusmodi summe floreni certos reddere et securos castrum nostrum Sempte appellatum in comitatu Posoniensi habitum...pignori duximus obligandum ymo impignoramus*... Ibid.

14. A random example of the warranty clause: ...*assumpimus nichilominus nostro et eorundem successorum nostrorum nominibus eundem Valentinum Wyncze et filios suos praedictos et eorum successores in dominio dicti castri Thadyka opidorum que ac possessionum et cunctarum pertinentiarum ac utilitatum prescriptarum usque tempus redemptionis eorundem et ipsarum contra quoslibet causidicos et actores intra et extra iudicium protegere et defensare propriis nostris et eorundem successorum nostrorum sumptibus laboribusque et expensis...* DF 200420.
15. ...*conservare protegere et expedire non possemus aut nostri succesoros non possent extinc alias consimiles possessiones de nostris possessionibus regalibus eisdem Stephano parvo et eius heredibus perpetuo dare et assignare...* DL 71794.
16. ...*assumentes nostro et heredum ac successorum nostrorum regum utputa Hungarie nominibus...quod premissa castra nostra civitates castella...aliquid ex isdem nusquam et nunquam a prefato comite Hermanno et eius heredibus recipiemus amovebimus seu auferri faciemus vel ipsi heredes et succesoros nostri recipient et amovebunt donec quousque nos vel iidem heredes et succesoros nostri...totalem premissam summam...simul et semel realiter et in effectum persolvemus...* DF 258343.
17. ...*ipse Mihalko seu sui heredes eandem possessionem Chocholna nulli alteri vendere alienare et obligare praesumatis sine nostre regie maiestatis licencia speciali harum nostrarum testimonio litterarum...* DL 8993.
18. ...*nunc urgentibus ipsum certis causis pignori obligare necesse haberet..* DL 86787.
19. ...*nobilis vir Mosticius de Stassow dominus Pasnaniensis in nostri presentia personaliter comparens nobis supplicavit...* Ibid.
20. ...*ad rationem pignoris huiusmodi iuxta regni nostri Hungarie consuetudinem accomodare presto fores dum ad id nostri regius liberalis accederet consensus pariter et assensus...* Ibid.
21. It should be added that in the charter the half of the castle of Pölöske is mentioned as being the subject of pledging, still the pledge holders became authorized to transfer further one of the two castles, not one or a half of it ...*hoc tamen specificato, quod idem dominus Johannes episcopus et Rodulphus si et in casu quo aliquam habuerint necessitatem unum eorumdem castrorum aut dictum oppidum Keztel pro certa pecuniarum summa qua fuerint necessarii quibus valuerint pignori obligare valeant atque possint...* DL 92575.
22. ...*ac idem castrum aliis quibus maluerit nostris dumtaxat fidelibus ulterius impignorare ac cum eodem sicuti legitimo pignore disponere valeat atque possit...* DL 8170.
23. ...*supradicti Georgius et Petrus aut eorum heredes aliqua necessitate coacti antedictum castrum nostrum usque tempus redempcionis eiusdem per nos aut succesoros nostros pretactos fiende cuiquam impignorare voluerint extunc huiusmodi impignoracionem non aliis nisi fidelibus regnicolis nostris et non alienigenis pro premissa summa florenis facere valeant atque possint...* DL 11514.
24. ...*de eisdem possessionibus infra tempus redemptionis ipsarum, cuicumque seu quibuscumque hominum personis aut ecclesiis in vita pariter et morte maluerit liberam tutam et absolutam disponendi seu legandi habeat facultatem et omnimodam potestatem...* DF 248255.
25. ...*civitatem de monte Grecz juxta Zagrabiam sitam, quam a Sigismundo titulo pignoris possidebat, legat regi, eidem pecuniam superinde concessam, relaxando.* Tkalčić (1894, p. 72).

26. ...*ad nostram requisitionem et specialem complacenciam nobis duo milia florenorum auri mutuo* ... DL 8170.
27. A good example of it is the peculiar way in which Sigismund granted amnesty to the rebels, after he managed to put down the rebellion against him slightly after the turn of the 15th century. Pardon was offered to the participants of the rebellion but, of course, it had its price; amnesty was granted for money or for the surrender of domains. For the rebellion and the consolidation of the king's rule afterwards see Mályusz (1990, pp. 69–76).
28. It should be noted that with the last loan of 1,640 florins lent to the ruler additional royal properties were given to them in pledge. DL 12919.
29. A random instance: *ita tamen quod quandocumque nos aut nostri successores reges utputa Hungarie prescriptum castrum nostrum Thadyka opidaque et alias possessiones superius nominatas cum suis pertinentiis et utilitatibus praescriptis redimere voluerimus seu voluerint ex tunc iidem Valentinus Wyncze ac Stephanus Emericus Nicolaus Petrus et Ladislaus filii eiusdem rehabitis praedictis sex milibus trecentis et quadragintaquinque florenis auri puri idem castrum opidi ac possessiones supradictas sine aliquali difficultate nobis aut eisdem nostris successoribus remittere teneantur* ... DF 258343.
30. ...*nobis vel nostris successoribus regibus Hungariae remittere et resignare debebit vel debebunt absque difficultate et occasione aliquali et quicumque praesentes litteras de voluntate et annuentia ipsorum Nicolai Dionysii Georgii Nicolai et Ladislai vel haeredum eorumdem habuerit eidem vel eisdem similiter ius competens debebit omnium praemissorum* ... DF 200390.
31. ...*hoc eciam per expressum declarato quod dum et quando nos aut nostri successores predicti antedictum castrum nostrum a prelibatis Georgio et Petro vel eorum heredibus redimere voluerimus tunc hoc seu huiuscemodi redempcionem ante spacium unius mensis integri iamfatis Georgio et Petro aut predictis heredibus eorum insinuare et indicare teneamur* ... DL 11514.
32. *et quandocumque nos aut nostri successores reges utputa Hungariae seu barones eiusdem regni nostri Hungariae huiusmodi castrum ... redimere voluerimus seu voluerint* ... DL 63135.
33. *et nec nos neque nostri successores reges utputa Hungariae idem castrum ... ab eadem domina usque vite sue dumtaxat tempore redimere repetere seu rehabere nec quacumque occasione alienare valeamus* DL 11755.
34. *si et inquantuius usque lapsum predictorum decem annorum integrorum predictas possessiones nostras Streche et Zulio pro premissa pecunie summa a prelibato Stephano et eius heredibus redimere non curaverimus extunc ipsas possessiones Streche et Zulio simul cum universis iuribus et pertinentiis tam annexis qui annexendis quibus prefatus quondam Nicolaus Cych eas tenuisset et tenere potuisset quibusque ad manus nostras regias sunt devolute in eo casu ipsis Stephano parvo ipsiusque heredibus et successoribus universis damus donamus et conferimus jure perpetuo et irrevocabiliter possidendas tenendas pariter et habendas* ... DL 71794.
35. *nos aut nostri successores reges scilicet Hungarie praetactum opidum nostrum Zawar ac praelibatam possessionem nostram Zuk a praedictis Gregorio et Johanne redimere voluerimus seu voluerint extunc ipse Gregorius praedictis mille ac dictus Johannes memoratis quingentis florenis auri promptis in florenis et non cum aliqua estimatione rerum cuiuscumque generis existant rehabitis et receptis* ... DL 73105.
36. This was generally true for the pledgings of the German territories. Landwehr (1967, p. 381).

37. *reformatione et recuperatione ipsius castri Appachasomlow...nobis magnificus vir dominus Nicolaus de Gara banus Machoviensis fidelis noster oretenus vel per certas suas litteras informabit... DL 100237.*
38. *eidem Nicolao palatino seu dictis suis dispositariis simul et semel in aliquo loco in quo ipse voluerint et securis ac bona sua voluntate plene contentus fuerit persolvere et deponere debeamus et debeant idem nostri successores... DL 87960.*
39. The charter is missing, only the transcription of László Fejérpataky is available. ZsO. IX. 777.
40. This was possible because the right to redeem the pledge was transferable to a third person. Landwehr 1967, p. 386.
41. Among Tátika's pledge holders there were Friedrich von Scharfeneck, the Marcali brothers, Bálint Vince of Szentgyörgy with his sons, Ivan and György of Krbava and László, Péter and Pető of Pető. The documents of the pledgings: DL, DF 200390, 200389, 200420, 200424, 200436, 200437, 13103.
42. *ad nostre maiestatis specialem requisicionem et complacenciam singularem duo milia florenorum auri puri veri et iusti ponderis...celsitudini nostre nomine veri mutui et sub spe restitutionis dederunt accommodarunt et realiter assignaverunt. Szabó Bártfai (1919, p. 358).*
43. *quequidem castra oppida villas possessiones et predia cum predictis ipsorum et earundem utilitatibus et pertinenciis annotatis Petrus filius palatini Emericusque et Ladislaus a pretacta domina regina pro premissis quinque milibus septingentis et septem florenis auri modo quo supra, redimere debebunt. Szabó Bártfai (1919, p. 358).*
44. *possessiones nostras regales Dehtar et Patak vocatas in comitatu Nogradiensi situatas nunc apud manus tuas a nobis pro certa pecunie summa titulo pignoris habitas...reverendissimo in Christo patri domino Georgio Archiepiscopo Strigoniensi vigore certarum aliarum litterarumstrarum impignoratarum exinde confectarum pro maiori sumpna pecuniarum quam eodem erga tuas manus habebantur pignori duximus obligandum... DF 248255.*
45. *ideo fidelitati tue firmiter mandamus praecipimus quatenus agnita presencium noticia rehabilitisque tuis pecuniis pro quibus praetacte possessiones nostre per nos tibi existunt impignorate...ipsi domino Archiepiscopo seu eius homini per ipsum ad hoc deputando absque omni difficultate remittere debeas et resignare... DF 248256.*
46. *vestre universitati et cuiuslibet vestrum fidelitati firmiter praecipiendo mandamus quatenus agnita praesentium noticia praefato domino Archiepiscopo vel suis officialibus vestri in medium per eum deputandis in omnibus et singulis parere obedire et obtemperare de universisque censibus proventibus obvencionibus et emolumentis ex parte provenire debentes respondere et eosdem sibi effective amministrare debeatis... DF 248257.*
47. Instances of pledged domain exchange: DL, DF 7454, 100237, 8050, 11232, 286391 etc.
48. The original charter informing about this action of the king has been destroyed during World War Two. Only a transcription made by László Fejérpataky exists today, it is kept in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in the Department of Manuscripts & Rare Books, Ms. 5001/2. I would like to thank Norbert C. Tóth for this reference.
49. Palatine Miklós Garai redeemed it in the name of the king. DL 10202, 10526, 10527.

50. Usually this is phrased as: *propter nostris vanas et validas expeditiones...* DL 7519.
51. *pro certorum negotiorum commodum utilitatem et profectum praetacti regni nostri Hungariae concernens expeditione indigemus...* DL 33412.
52. *quod quemadmodum nos alias variis eo tunc nostris et regnorum nostrorum necessitatibus et arduissimis expeditionibus utilitatem et defensam ipsorum regnorum nostrorum ac confiniorum eorundem tangentibus...* DF 258343. *pro certorum nostrorum negotiorum commodum utilitatem et defensionem praedicti regni nostri Hungarie concernens...* DL 12770.
53. *propter commodum utilitatem et profectum et ipsius regni nostri potissime tamen per eo quid pro defensione et tuitione annotati regni nostri quod permittente deo per nephandorum thurcorum crebros insultus cottidie lacessitur...* DL 7892.
54. *conservacione earundem contra perfidissimos Hussitas et Taboritas qui ipsas partes nostras superiores plerique hostiliter invadere consueverunt...* DL 91021.
55. *utrique Johanni Olah filiis condam Woyk de Hunyad ad tres menses proxime venturos videlicet Octobrem Novembrem et Decembrem in quibus idem cum quinquaginta lanceis more exercituantium nobis servire tenebuntur pro solutione huiusmodi quinquaginta lancearum seu gencium sub eisdem lanceis exercituantium pro qualibet lancea per viginti quinque florenos auri solvendo...* DL 13088.
56. *castrum nostram Thadyka cum oppido Gestel ac aliis villis et pertinentiis suis nobili ac strenuo militi Friderico de Scharfenek ratione fidelium servitorum et salarii sui in quo sibi obligabamur...* DF 200390.
57. *pro eorum dampnis in conservationem iamdicti castris per eos perceptis...* DL 73105.
58. A similar charter was issued one year later (DL 12410). For these constructions and their costs see Szűcs (1958, pp. 313–363).
59. *pro salario et expensis personalis et continue residentie sue per eum in curia nostra faciendo, necnon conservatione et custodia castris nostri Budensis ex collectis civitatum nostrarum Budensis et Pestyensis ac Judeorum nostrorum aliundeque annuatim provenire deputata...ad nostram instantem requisitionem per eum benivole adhibita...* DL 87960.
60. *usque tempus vero redemptionis dictarum possessionum universos census et proventus consuetos recipiendi et exigendi...* DL 11088.
61. *annuimus...quandocunque nos aut predicti successores nostri reges scilicet Hungariae super alias civitates et possessiones regales generales taxas extraordinarias imposuerimus seu imposuerint tunc et ipsi super populos et iobagiones in opidis villis possessionibus et pertinentiis preadictorum nostrorum castrorum Ilswa et Fülek residentes taxam similiter extraordinariam levem tamen et moderatam per quam huiusmodi opida possessiones que ville et pertinentie ac populi in eisdem residentes non desolentur...* DL 12770. This is only one such example among many, similar authorization can be read in: DL, DF 200420, 200437, 86789, 33941, 71469.
62. *simulcum universis possessionibus tenutis iuribus et pertinentiis eiusdem* DL 34049.
63. *cum tributo in eadem civitate exigi solito necnon omnibus quibusvis iuribus iurisdictionibus proventibus et obventionibus universis solitis consuetisque et ordinati dempta solummodo et excepta una integra curia in dicta civitate Debrechen pro domino pertinente et per nos pro camera seu repositoio salium nostrorum regalium reservata et deputata...* DF 212742.

64. *Volumus tamen quod de salibus nostris regiis ad dictam civitatem seu cameram nostram in eadem habitam importandis de eisdem per quoscumque et quoquam exportandis et deducendis idem Andreas Baliczky et homines sui seu sanguinis alii nullum tributum exigere debeant et extorquere modo via et forma quibuscumque... Ibid.*
65. *castrum nostrum Ermin vocatum simulcum suis pertinentiis, et precipue districtu Lapacz ac iudicio et iudicatu sedium ad ipsum castrum pertinentium... Thallóczy (1910, p. 292).*
66. *omnium et singularem ecclesiarum ad castra et perninencias predictos spectantium ius patronatus nostrum regium pleno iure et auctoritate in eisdem ecclesiis habere et de eodem iure patronatus uti frui et gaudere possint... DL 10330.*
67. Winfried Reichert reached the same conclusion concerning the pledgings of the counts of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Reichert (1993, pp. 346–347).
68. For instance, in 1435 the castle of Tátika was pledged twice, intriguingly the terms of the two pledging differed, with Sigismund authorizing the pledgees to collect extraordinary tax only in the second pledging. DF 200436, 200437.

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7

The Economic Background to and the Financial Politics of Queen Barbara of Cilli in Hungary (1406–1438)

Daniela Dvořáková

The Queen of Hungary, Germany and Bohemia, and Holy Roman Empress, Barbara of Cilli (1392–1451), the second wife of King Sigismund of Luxembourg, is one of the most remarkable historical female personalities of the Middle Ages. She is one of that select group of historical figures who become part of legends, myths and national folklore as well. From the earliest humanist histories, Queen Barbara has been viewed as an utterly negative character, schemer, power-desiring woman, alchemist, heretic, and agnostic. In historiography, she has even earned the unflattering epithet ‘German Messalina’, given to her by Johannes Cuspinianus at the beginning of the 16th century (Cuspinianus, 1540, p. 602). However, these legends about Queen Barbara have been reliably disproved by modern historical investigation. A detailed analysis of contemporary written sources enables us to reconstruct the reasons for the later creation of the negative legends about her, its initiators, and how it was spread in literature of that era and later, as well as in historical works (Dvořáková, 2013).

Undoubtedly, Barbara was an exceptional woman. Her extraordinary character was evident when performing her duties as the queen of Hungary. Contrary to the received ideas and practices of her era, which restricted the role of the queen to a representative or to social fields such as charitable activities, Barbara moved beyond these boundaries in a number of spheres. During some periods, she participated in ruling the Kingdom of Hungary to an extraordinary extent. During the recurring absences of her husband from the country (e.g. 1411–1414, 1431–1434),

she, as a member of the governing council, performed the duties of the monarch. This involvement by the queen in governing activities markedly exceeds the practice of that era. Thus, Barbara could significantly influence both the politics and economy and culture of the era. From 1425, Barbara of Cilli had represented the most important political power in Hungary. Nonetheless, she filled this position in line with her husband's interests, and to him she provided substantial financial as well as political aid.

Her political power was closely connected with the huge fortune that she successfully acquired. She managed to enlarge her assets continuously via economic and financial policy. A reconstruction of the assets and incomes of Queen Barbara, which provided the political power base for her position as the Queen of Hungary, represents the objective of this study.

The daughter of Sigismund's courtier and follower, Hermann II, Barbara of Cilli was crowned the wife of Sigismund of Luxemburg in Székesfehérvár (Latin Alba Regia) on 6 December 1405. Together with the Hungarian crown, she also received the dowry assets designated for Hungarian queens. These possessions were intended to maintain the social status of the queen not only during her husband's life but especially after his death, should she survive him. In that case, they should have secured her an appropriate standard of living. From the perspective of Hungarian history, Queen Barbara was a pioneer in this respect. Her husband provided her with more extensive possessions as a dower than any of the queens preceding her had ever had. At the moment of Sigismund's passing away, she became by far the wealthiest person in the country. Barbara was the first to acquire plenty of castle manors and towns, which had never previously been assigned as a dower, and which also remained dowry possessions for her successors. Shortly after the marriage, Barbara, on the basis of her new status, held the traditional possessions of Hungarian queens: the Diósgyőr Castle, Csepel Island located near Buda, Óbuda Castle, the town of Kecskemét together with Queen's Cumans, and the small town of Tolnavár. However, not long after the marriage, she was given another two castles, Buják and Szanda, in Nógrád County, and the entire Verőce County in Slavonia with its castles as her dowry possessions (Mályusz, 1990, p. 91). Between 1409 and 1419, Virovitica County was administered by staff of her father, Hermann II of Cilli, and later by Barbara's county sheriffs. This proves that the queen's father initially played an important role in the administration of her estates. Other dowry possessions acquired by Barbara from Sigismund, *de facto* represented an extension to her father's property

base as well, since almost all of them were situated in Slavonia. It is therefore no coincidence that, in 1406, shortly after she was crowned queen, Barbara's father Hermann II was granted the ban (the governorship of the territory) of Slavonia. Thus, the Cilli family acquired another strategic area – Slavonia – under its control.

More precise information about which possessions in Slavonia comprised Barbara's dowry can be found in Sigismund's charter from 1428, by which he exchanged them for different, larger ones located in Upper Hungary (in the territory of today's Slovakia). In Slavonia, she owned the castles of Szaplonca, Kiskemlék and Nagykemlék, Kőkapronca or Kővár together with the town (Kapronca), the entire area of Velika with its small castle and town, the town of Gradec near Zagreb (*civitas Montis Grecensis de Zagrabia*), Garić, Gersenche, Palichna, and all income arising from the so-called tax on marten pelts (*mardurinum*). The *mardurinum* basically represented the same concept as Hungarian *lucrum camerae*, that is to say the tax paid to the royal treasury by the population. Since the Roman period, taxes in Croatia and Slavonia were paid in marten pelts. However, after a reform by the Arpadian King Coleman, this tax was settled in money. Nonetheless, it preserved its name *mardurinum* (In Croatian: marten pelt). That is why the national currency of Croatia has been called kuna (marten) until now. The incomes from the Slavonian manors and *mardurinum* are estimated at eight thousand Hungarian florins per year. Moreover, incomes from the third tithe (today, it would be termed the import and export tax), representing approximately twenty thousand guldens per year, were at the queen's disposal. This money provided the queen with a guaranteed annual income, since she did not have to wait for it to be paid over by the monarch and his officials. Rather, the collection of these taxes was carried out by the queen herself via an apparatus of collectors fully controlled by her. In addition, the incomes from the New Year's presents (so-called *munera strenalia*) given to the royal couple, that is to the king and queen, by all royal towns have to be counted as well. They usually took the form of goldsmiths' luxurious items and fabrics but could have been paid also in money.

However, a total figure for the annual incomes of the Hungarian queens preceding Barbara cannot be reconstructed owing to the lack of written sources. Therefore it cannot be stated whether her incomes were comparable to those of her predecessors. Anyway, Barbara was able to build up a financial reserve through smart management. She continuously enlarged her possessions through purchasing and acquiring properties as pledges for loans. She acquired Maichau Castle in Carniola from

her relatives, the Counts of Gorica (Barbara's sister Elizabeth was the spouse of Heinrich of Gorica), in pledge for approximately four thousand guildens. In January 1417, Barbara sold the castle to her brother, Frederick of Cilli, for the same sum of money.¹ Several references in sources show her direct involvement in significant financial matters. For instance, in the case of a debt of twenty-three thousand guildens that Sigismund borrowed from Count Ludwig of Bavaria-Ingolstadt, Barbara stood as surety for her husband. She was joined by Frederick, burgrave of Nuremburg, Pipo of Ozora, and John Újvárosi, Provost of Esztergom and Imperial Vice-chancellor. Barbara undertook that, if the debt was not repaid within the stipulated term, she would pledge her gold and silver items to cover the given amount of money.² In spite of the promises and obligations of the sureties, later on, Ludwig could not get his money back. In contrast to the documentary sources, Sigismund's biographer and courtier, Eberhard Windecke, added an element of court gossip to the whole matter: when Ludwig did not succeed in claiming his money from Sigismund, he required it from Barbara as surety, who herself, already in Constance, issued an obligatory deed in his favour. To protect the queen from inconvenience, one of the other sureties, Frederick, burgrave of Nuremburg, paid the entire sum instead of her (instead of twenty three thousand florins, Windecke states seventeen). 'However, by doing so he did not do any favour to the queen and later on, he did harm to himself since he was suspected of having an affair with her' (Windecke, 1893, p. 142; Chilian, 1908, p. 28).

An extensive debt owed by the Teutonic Order to Barbara proves that she played an unspecified role in her husband's financial business. In February 1413, she sent the master of her treasury, Erasmus of Lichtenburg, to Prussia, in order to collect on her behalf the repayment of a debt amounting to fifteen thousand florins.³ The debt probably represented a sum promised to Sigismund for his mediation of peace between the Teutonic order and Kingdom of Poland. Sigismund might have let Barbara take care of the collection of this sum as he did several times afterwards. Later, in September 1413, Barbara claimed the rest of the debt from Grand Master of The Teutonic order, and threatened him by letter that she would complain to the King of Poland.⁴ In this connection, a charter of the palatine, Nicholas of Gara, and John of Kanizsa, archbishop of Esztergom, who together with Queen Barbara, governed Hungary during Sigismund's absence) from 13 June 1414 also contains exceptionally interesting material. The charter represented the resolution of a complaint, raised by the Teutonic Order, about various hostile acts performed by the king of Poland. Among other things, the Polish

had captured Barbara's envoy and townsman of Buda, John Stadler, who had been entrusted with a task by the king and queen, on his way from Wrocław to Prussia (the aforesaid charter states that his task was to collect money for Barbara). On other occasions, they arrested factors, travelling from Prussia to Wrocław with wagons loaded with cloth and other precious items belonging to the queen, and detained them for five days.⁵ References to the factors and wagons loaded with the queen's goods, and damage arising to Barbara as a result of the arrest of the tradesmen, point out the queen's business activities.

Shopping by the queen in exclusive foreign markets, for instance Venice, is also mentioned in other sources. This information can be found in her mandate of 17 May 1417 addressed to the entire nobility and ordering the imprisonment of the goldsmith John and his accomplices, since, near Lake Balaton, they had stolen thirteen hundred guildens in the form of pure gold from her staff, entrusted with the purchase of jewels in Venice.⁶ Nonetheless, what is noteworthy is Barbara's maintenance of business relations with Venice in 1417, while her husband was at war with the Republic of Venice, which war had been ongoing for several years. At the same time that Barbara was sending her staff to Venice to purchase items, her husband was intensively working on the project of a trade blockade which should have shut out the Republic of Saint Mark from international trade. Although the armistice between the belligerent parties, signed in Castellet, lasted between 1413 and 1418, it was only an interim interruption of the war and not an end to the enmity. Venice was repeatedly preparing assassination attempts on King Sigismund, while he in return was actively working on the trade war project in 1416–1417. Special permits for the import of goods from Venice were issued by the king. However, it is difficult to say whether Barbara held such a permit or simply acted according to her current needs and interests (Štefánik, 2004, p. 44 note 130). It is possible that this might be the time when Barbara started to irritate Sigismund with her individual decisions that sometimes ran directly against his own will. Between 1412 and 1419, the monarch was constantly staying outside the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary, which created a great space for Barbara, as the governor, to implement her own plans.

After Sigismund's return from the Council of Constance in 1419, a serious conflict between husband and wife took place. Nonetheless, the exact causes of it are not known (Dvořáková, 2013, pp. 10–120). The king dissolved his wife's court and probably seized her dowry possessions and the income generated from them as well. Between 1419 and 1420, except for two charters that she gave on 16 January and 27 March

1419 in Buda and by which she confirmed her receipt of the New Year's presents from the towns Sopron and Bratislava, Barbara completely vanishes from written sources.⁷ Apart from the two mentioned charters, no other charter from that period issued by her has been preserved. We know that her court completely ceased to function for several years. There are no references concerning notables or dignitaries of the queen's court in written sources from the period 1419–1422. Sigismund did not allow his wife to have her own court again until 1423. Although a reconciliation of the couple took place at the end of 1419, Sigismund did not restore her incomes including the New Year's presents of the royal towns until 1421. The towns then had to settle their obligations from the intervening years when Barbara was not receiving them.⁸ Barbara also vigorously sought to restore her incomes and recover 'lost profits' herself. For instance, on 3 May 1421, she addressed a charter to the town officials of Sopron requiring them, within a period of three weeks, to submit all receipts for payments made for the New Year's presents dating back to her coronation.⁹ Other unspecified financial operations between Sigismund and Barbara took place, as well. On 23 August 1421, Sigismund issued a charter asking the Duke of Austria, Albrecht, to provide Barbara with four thousand florins from the sum that he was obliged to pay Sigismund, since the king owed them to her.¹⁰ This probably represents part of the sum of four hundred thousand florins that Albrecht should have paid to Sigismund for the marriage with the latter's only daughter Elizabeth. Apparently, through the sum of four thousand florins, they secured consent from Queen Barbara, who had previously refused a connection with the House of Habsburg owing to the traditional rivalry between the Houses of Cilli and Habsburg, and personal antipathy to her future son-in-law.

Barbara also recovered her dowry possessions very quickly. By 1421 she, undoubtedly, again held Óbuda, a traditional possession of Hungarian queens. Her donation made in September 1421, by which she donated a mill house to nuns from Óbuda on the condition that her Óbuda castle wardens would be served for no charge, provides indirect evidence of this.¹¹ The complete restitution of Barbara's possessions to the same state as before 1419 is testified also by the fact that she resumed the collection of the third tithe and *mardurinum* from 1423.¹²

In 1424, Barbara achieved not only confirmation and recovery of her original possessions, but also their substantial enlargement. In Visegrád, on 22 May 1424, Sigismund issued two donation charters in favour of Barbara. Through the first one, he gave her as a gift the castles of Buják and Szanda with their respective villages located in Nógrád County,

and whole villages or shares in some other villages in Nógrád, Pest and Heves counties as well. The third tithes of the whole kingdom were also included in the donation.¹³ The charter explicitly states that the king is gifting these possessions to her 'denuo et ex novo', that is they represent assets which had been already owned by Barbara. Issued on the same day, the second donation was a completely new one. The king gave his wife the entire county of Zvolen (Zólyom) together with the royal town of Zvolen and its royal palace, the royal towns of Brezno and Krupina, and the castles of Dobrá Niva, Lupča and Víglaš, and Šášov Castle as well. Moreover, the monarch gifted her with the mining towns of Banská Bystrica, Lubietová, Kremnica, Banská Štiavnica, Nová Baňa, and Pukanec, and the small mining municipalities or villages of Banská Belá, Banská Hodruša, and Banský Studenec. However, the grant of the mining towns included an exception. In the future, Barbara should have no right to interfere, under any pretext, in royal incomes from mines, with the authority of the count of an urbura charged with collecting taxes from the mines, and in the court of the royal master of the treasury, to whom the mentioned mining towns were subordinated.¹⁴

The grants of 22 May 1424, substantially extended Barbara's original possessions, consisting not only of castles and towns in Slavonia and behind the Drava River, but also the assets traditionally belonging to the queen, such as Óbuda, Diósgyőr, Kecskemét, Csepel Island, Miskolcz, and many others. As has been mentioned, Barbara regained also the income from the third tithes of the entire country, which represented twenty thousand florins.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the reason why the king made such a generous donation to his wife is unknown. The ostensible reason for the gift given in the charter was to provide for his wife in case she became a widow: 'Analysing and carefully considering the way how, when and from what resources is Her Highness the Queen going to live her earthly life – especially during the time of her widowhood – in usual fame of Her Highness according to needs of her post and rank, in order not to make Her Excellency the Queen feel deprived of a privilege of her position and bereaved of earthly items and assets, but happy in its plenitude...'.¹⁶ In order to prevent Barbara from feeling 'bereaved of earthly items', Sigismund later gave her the seized assets of Nicholas of Salgó, condemned for a crime of adultery, located in the Hont, Nógrád, Heves, and Gemer County (in the Slovak territory, it was, for instance, the Hajnáčka Castle), and Liptov County with Liptov Castle, Liptovský Hrádok Castle, and Likava Castle, and finally the castles of Jelšava and Filakovo, after the death of Juraj of Jelšava without male heirs (Engel, 1977, pp. 74–75). In 1426, Sigismund also gave Barbara also another

three castle manors located outside the territory of Hungary, in Moravia, being: Světlov, Brumov and Pulčín (Blučina), to hold for her life.¹⁷

In 1427, just the profit from the mining towns, assigned to her by Sigismund in return for the profits from the *mardurinum* and third tithes, provided the queen with twenty-eight thousand florins. If we add to this amount the profits from the particular castle manors, we get a staggering sum.¹⁸ In May 1424, Sigismund probably issued yet another, additional charter for Barbara, of which neither the original nor its copy has been preserved. This charter represented the donation of Trenčín County with its castles (Trenčín, Súča, Vršatec, Považská Bystrica, Hričov, Strečno and Starhrad) to Barbara. Soon after that she, in return for this donation, assigned her assets in Slavonia to Sigismund. Later on, those assets were granted by Sigismund to the palatine, Nicholas of Gara. This charter states that the queen's assets in Slavonia were endangered by the Turks, which is why she was given the entire Trenčín County with seven other castle manors in return for them.¹⁹ The charter of 25 May 1424 of Duke Albrecht of Austria and Hungarian magnates, by which they confirmed Barbara's ownership of all assets, represents direct evidence that Barbara owned Trenčín County together with respective royal castles as early as 1424. It survives today and is stored in the National Archive of Hungary. Originally, eighteen seals of co-issuers were hung on it, however only fourteen of them have been preserved.²⁰ All the queen's possessions, including those located in Slavonia and Trenčín County, are listed. Thus, Barbara became the wealthiest woman in Hungary and should have remained so until her death. Not only the king himself via his charters, but also his future successor, Albrecht I, and the most significant Hungarian prelates and barons had guaranteed that position to her. Shortly after that, an agreed exchange must have taken place, since Stupčanica Castle, part of Barbara's original possessions, was donated by the king to the Counts of Pezinok (de Bozen) on 31 May 1424. The charter mentions that the castle had been assigned to the king after Sigismund and his queen agreed on the exchange of her castles in Trenčín County for assets in Slavonia.²¹

Thus, from May 1424, Barbara was an exceptionally rich queen. She acquired possessions undreamt of by her predecessors. Nonetheless, it is difficult to say how she achieved this. From the outside, she remained in the background. Only a single charter by her survives from 1424. Issued in Visegrád on 6 February, it confirmed the receipt of the New Year's present of the town Sopron.²² She did not engage in activities or officially perform any monarchic powers. Barbara was standing by her husband, or rather in his shadow, all the time, and this tactic served

her well. Sigismund continued to grant further possessions to her. Some historiographers believe that the accumulation of possessions in Barbara's hands resulted from a deliberate scheme devised by Sigismund and his advisers to get rid of royal possessions that brought the crown no or only minimal benefits. On her estates, Barbara ruled like a feudal lord. She appointed castle wardens and administrators, and required them to submit exact financial statements. An interesting fact is that she surrounded herself especially by townsmen and members of the middle or lower gentry. It seems that her choices were good and Barbara was cost-conscious because her possessions brought her high incomes, which she invested in the acquisition of new castle manors. For Sigismund, it might have been more profitable to pledge castles to his wife, since there was a greater chance of their return to the royal crown (it would have been expected that Barbara would own them only until her death or solemnisation of a new marriage), and if needed, Barbara would provide him with the financial resources to support his spectacular projects. At the time of Sigismund's death, the queen owned almost thirty castle manors, mining towns in central Slovakia and many other towns and small municipalities.

In 1427, Sigismund assigned to her not only the income from the Kremnica *urbura* but also from other mining towns. What the king reserved as his own sovereign right in 1424, he generously donated to his wife in 1427, together with the right to appoint her own master of treasury and *comes urburae*, the chamber count collecting on the sovereign's behalf the tax on minerals (*urbura*). The monarch renounced *urburas* from all mining towns (as we have seen, he had already granted them to Barbara), including income from the mining of heavy metals, that is gold, silver, lead, and iron, as well as the income from coin minting by the mint in Kremnica. The mining of copper was the only exception not contained in the grant. Barbara had the right to receive the first income from the mint up to the amount of twenty-eight thousand florins, and all the incomes exceeding this amount belonged to the king. In case the profits did not reach the required amount, the queen had the right to recover them from other sources listed in the charter. Apart from these incomes, the taxes paid by the mining towns, amounting to hundreds of florins (Kremnica alone paid six hundred florins together with one hundred florins as the New Year's present), were at the queen's disposal.

The charter by which the Hungarian magnates agreed to the assignment of the *urbura* to Barbara was issued in Braşov, Transylvania, on 1 February 1427.²³ However, the place of its issuance was not chosen

by chance. Sigismund had been pursuing an anti-Turkish campaign in southern Hungary since the autumn of 1426. In December 1426, he settled in Braşov from where he managed his military operations. A remarkable fact is that Barbara accompanied Sigismund to Transylvania.²⁴

Thanks to her wealth, enlarged through sound financial management, a considered financial policy, as well as the selection of competent staff, the queen always possessed financial resources that her husband continuously required. Owing to his absolute focus on politics, he had no capacity to deal simultaneously with the administration of his assets. In return for her financial support of the king, Barbara kept receiving larger and larger assets. For instance, in July 1429, Sigismund granted her the imperial tax from the city of Frankfurt for the rest of her life, and in 1430, he donated to her the entire Liptov County together with Liptov Castle and other royal assets located in this county, in exchange for forty-one hundred florins that she lent him for protection of the country.²⁵ At approximately the same time, Barbara provided her husband with another five thousand seven hundred and seven florins, for which she acquired the castles Filakovo and Jelšava in pledge.²⁶

Although these extensive possessions and incomes provided the queen with a sufficient economic base, and certainly also political influence, during the first half of the 1420s, she stayed in the background. Therefore, her influence on Sigismund's decisions, as well as her role in his financial operations, for instance the fact that collection of the imperial tax of the city of Frankfurt was organised by the queen in 1425, can be only deduced from small hints. For example, it is remarkable that on 31 July 1425, only one day before King Sigismund ceremonially granted to Frederick the Quarrelsome the territory of the elector of Saxony as a fiefdom, in Buda, Barbara issued a quittance in favour of Frederick of Saxony confirming that she had received eight hundred florins of the total sum of twelve thousand guldens, which the new elector of Saxony owed her.²⁷ One cannot help thinking that she played some role in the grant of the fiefdom to Frederick, and received an appropriate reward in return.

Similarly, she might have influenced the relationship between Sigismund of Luxembourg and Vytautas, Grand Duke of Lithuania, who was the cousin of the Polish King Władysław II Jagiełło, with whom she maintained friendly relations. Vytautas attempted to secure an ally in the queen's court in the form of her chancellor, Peter of Rozgon (Rozhanovce), Bishop of Veszprim, or via some of his relatives. Vytautas addressed a letter to an unspecified 'Rozgon' from which it follows that a longer mutual communication must have taken place between them.²⁸

It is not impossible that Barbara was also behind Sigismund's decision, made in 1429, to promote the Duke of Lithuania to the title of king. Naturally, it did not represent only an act of friendship by Sigismund towards Vytautas. In fact, the coronation was intended to secure greater political objectives. Not least, he wanted to demonstrate his dominance, as the Bohemian and Holy Roman Emperor (although not yet crowned), over the Pope. However, the Polish King Władysław posed a problem, since his consent had to be acquired. Barbara accompanied Sigismund on his distressing journey to an assembly held in Lutsk, where he presented his daring plan for Vytautas's coronation in January 1429, and where she also played an active role. In Lutsk, Sigismund demonstrated his diplomatic talent and competence to achieve his goal. Apart from the plan concerning the coronation of Vytautas as King of Lithuania, he brought the idea of unifying the Eastern and the Latin Churches. He spoke out in favour of discussing the Hussite issue and matters related to the reformation of the church during the new church council, and the inclusion of the Russians and Greeks into the unified Latin Church (Baum, 1996, p. 248).

According to the Polish chronicler, Jan Długosz, Barbara not only attended these talks, but also did not hesitate (contrary to ideas how a medieval lady should behave), together with Sigismund to storm into King Władysław's bedchamber, while he was lying in his bed. They drove his secretaries out the chamber and extracted consent for Vytautas' coronation from the surprised Polish king.²⁹ The morning entrance into Władysław's bedchamber in the presence of not only Barbara but also of Vytautas and some of Sigismund's advisers was also confirmed by King Sigismund himself, in a letter to Władysław, in which he recalled this situation and wondered why Władysław had retracted his previous consent.³⁰ A third source provides evidence from Vytautas, another participant in the morning raid, as well. In the letter to Władysław, containing a complaint about his retraction of his consent, Vytautas describes the whole situation as follows: as he was on his way to Władysław as usual, Sigismund and Barbara blocked his way between a doorway and stairs and told him that the Polish king had visited them at night and agreed to his coronation. Vytautas probably had some doubts about this, therefore Sigismund suggested an immediate visit to Władysław in his bedchamber, and they really went ahead and did it. When entering the bedchamber, King Władysław was laying in his bed and, according to Vytautas, he repeated his consent to them voluntarily. Vytautas allegedly even asked him in Lithuanian whether he did not want to discuss it with his barons and prelates, nonetheless, he repeated

his consent again.³¹ It is hard to say whether he was under greater pressure when the Queen of Germany and Hungary was standing next to his bed, or after his return to Poland, when he was explaining the whole situation to Polish magnates who forced him to take back his consent. Beyond a doubt, Sigismund had planned the entire scene, during which he used Władysław's weakness for Queen Barbara and also the moment of surprise when she suddenly appeared next to his bed, in advance.

In such complicated diplomatic negotiations, backstage meetings and searches for allies, Barbara probably played a role that may, at first sight, be hidden but was, nonetheless, certainly not insignificant. Written several months after her return from Lutsk in Bratislava on 26 August 1429, her letter to the Grand Duke Vytautas indicates this. It represented her answer to a previous letter containing an unspecified accusation from him and her assurance about her honour and readiness to satisfy him in anything he would choose. As a sign of reconciliation, she sent him a precious ring decorated with an emerald.³² Moreover, Sigismund, together with Barbara, accepted Vytautas into the Order of the Dragon and sent him the insignia of the order in the very same month.³³ Sharply protested by the Pope and subsequently also by the Polish king, Sigismund's plans to crown the Grand Duke of Lithuania as king did not work out. Although the royal crown was already on the way to Vilnius, where the coronation was intended to be held in September 1430, Vytautas' long-desired coronation did not happen. First, a vanguard of Sigismund's messengers carrying the crown was kidnapped by the Poles. And then, when it started to seem that the dispute would be successfully resolved through diplomatic means, eighty-year-old Vytautas died on 27 October 1430.

Barbara's power over Sigismund was definitely not a secret and the queen probably had to face repeated attempts to corrupt her. For instance, on 26 January 1428, the Venetian senate designated a sum of five thousand ducats to bribe the queen and chosen Hungarian barons, who were to help persuade the monarch to conclude peace terms. Another five thousand ducats had previously been designated and approved for the same purpose, albeit intended for different persons in Hungary.³⁴ It is noteworthy that the plans to bribe Barbara took place when Sigismund was engrossed in the military campaign in southern Hungary, and Barbara was temporarily 'lonely'. Less than ten years later, Milanese envoys attempted something similar in Prague in 1437. Thanks to a certain man, they were even successful in making a contact with Barbara.³⁵ It remains unknown whether Barbara ever accepted a bribe, nonetheless, it seems improbable that she, with such enormous fortune,

would accept, for instance, those aforementioned five thousand ducats from Venice and thus threaten her position if it was revealed.

Moreover, she was continuously acquiring newer and further incomes from the king. Another acquisition that she received from her husband was the Jewish tax, which had to be paid by all Jews after the coronation of the emperor. On 21 March 1436, Sigismund issued a charter in Buda by which this entire 'coronation' tax, not collected yet, was left to Barbara for her own use on the grounds of the love and trust he felt toward her.³⁶ Nevertheless, this was not an exceptional gesture of love towards his wife. He gave her money that had not yet been collected. The charter itself says that he was not successful in the collecting taxes in a lot of places. Also Sigismund's charters from 1434 testify his previous unsuccessful attempts at tax collection.³⁷ Barbara began to collect this tax very vigorously. During the first week following the issuance of Sigismund's charter to her benefit, she authorised the townsmen of Buda, Michal Nadler, Thomas Gottlieb and Jewish rabbi, magister Joseph to collect the tax for her.³⁸ At the same time, Barbara asked Amadeus, Count of Savoy, to help and support her authorised collectors.³⁹ However, we do not know how successful her attempts were. Anyway, the Count of Savoy had been reluctant to collect this tax from 'his Jews' for the emperor as early as 1434.⁴⁰ Even the vigorous Barbara seemed to have problems with collecting the tax, and therefore she asked the Pope, Eugene IV, to support her envoys appointed to collect the tax in Rome. In 1437, she sent her representatives with the same objective also to other places.⁴¹

It would be wrong to think that Queen Barbara was merely accumulating money and possessions. Her post also brought her huge expenses. From 1428, when part of Barbara's estate was threatened by Hussite invasions from the Kingdom of Bohemia, they reached a stressful level. During 1430–1434, while Sigismund was again not resident in Hungary (he left for Germany, then moved to Rome to be crowned emperor, and finally attended the Council of Basel). Thus, protection of the country had to be carried mainly on the queen's shoulders. The recurrent Hussite invasions required investments to increase the defensive capacity of royal castles and towns. Sigismund granted to Barbara the entire New Year's presents from the royal towns that belonged to him, probably for these purposes. The queen paid great attention to their collection. At the beginning of 1432, she addressed several charters to the royal towns warning them that they were obliged to fulfil their duty towards the monarch via her.⁴² The New Year's presents (*munera strennalia*) for the royal couple, which the royal towns had to pay annually, most frequently took the form of various luxury

goods, such as fabrics, silver dishes, and especially goblets and bowls. Sometimes, but only rarely, they were paid in money. For instance, the town of Bratislava gave the king and queen six bolts of precious cloth and two goblets, both decorated with their coat of arms – a bigger one for the king and a smaller one for the queen.⁴³ These items were accepted by Barbara on the behalf of the king in May 1432. However, she was not satisfied with the fact that the New Year's presents were delivered to her several months after the stipulated date. Therefore, she decided to require them in advance and even specify what particular presents should look like. Every delay was immediately dealt with by the queen, as can be demonstrated by several letters, for instance, from the archive of the town of Kremnica. Barbara's conflicts with the towns over the New Year's presents might have caused Sigismund to withdraw this right from her in 1434 and to order the towns not to pay it to anyone until his return to the country. Nevertheless, the conflict worsened further, since the townsmen of the royal towns were subject to a double pressure from the king and queen, because Barbara did not want to abandon the income granted to her.

The queen was intensely involved in financial policy. Her financial operations must have been complicated, although nowadays, it is basically impossible to reconstruct them. They can only be assumed from references in surviving sources. For instance, a certain Wilhelm Fuchsel from Banská Bystrica probably played some unspecified role in the collection of money for Barbara. On 22 March 1432, in Zvolen, Barbara wrote to all judges of the kingdom to help him with debt collection because he was a creditor of lots of debtors.⁴⁴ Several days later, on 26 March she ordered the town of Sopron to immediately arrest Wilhelm Fuchsel also with all his assets, for he was not worthy of her mercy and earned only her disfavour.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, Barbara's heavy financial demands cannot be seen as a manifestation of greed or a desire for money. She was the owner of a huge estate during very unfavourable times. Just the expenses to protect her own properties amounted to an astronomical sum. A great number of estates and rights required a great number of capable people taking care of them. And the queen had to pay them accordingly. How huge were the sums Barbara invested to keep her assets untouched in the turbulent times can be illustrated from her charter of 14 February 1432, issued in favour of Pangrác of Szent Miklós (Svätý Mikuláš), the castle warden of the queen's two Moravian castles, Brumov and Světlav. For 'soldier's pay' and 'salary' from the time he started to work in the post of the castle warden, and owing to his military assistance in battles against the Hussites, the queen owed him one

1,972 florins. In return for her debt, she pledged to him Vršatec Castle (for 1,272 florins) and the territory of the demolished Budatín Castle (for 700 florins).⁴⁶

In spite of the high costs arising from the administration and protection of the queen's estate, as well as for maintaining the royal court, including also the remuneration of loyal servants via assets, Barbara continued to reside in the Kingdom of Hungary. This extensive lordship provided her with great political power. Sigismund and Barbara's son-in-law, Albrecht of Austria, husband of her only daughter Elizabeth, whom Sigismund chose as his successor, was also aware of it. Ruling the Kingdom of Hungary while being watched by the powerful House of Cilli would certainly not be simple, and perhaps be impossible, for Albrecht. Barbara seized control over the north (a great part of Upper Hungary), while her brother together with his nephew dominated the south of the country with their huge lordship in Slavonia. At the time of the Sigismund's death, apart from the mining towns, incomes from the mining chamber, coin mintage and third tithes, the queen also owned a huge feudal lordship consisting of approximately thirty castle manors. From the perspective of Hungary as a whole, it can be stated that a significant part of the royal assets was under Barbara's control. While living harmoniously with Sigismund, the queen's assets also benefited the king indirectly – as Barbara provided him with the financial resources that he lacked. Nevertheless, these assets could have been equally used against the interests of the kingdom and Albrecht was fully aware of this fact. Immediately after Sigismund's death, probably in December 1437, he had an updated list of the legal state of the royal assets compiled. The list is almost identical with data from other documentary sources. Only the changes (for instance, a grant of the Beckov Castle) made before Sigismund's death were not included in it.⁴⁷ The outcome provided by the list must have been disappointing for Albrecht. In 1437, the monarch owned only thirty castle manors (excluding the queen's, pledged castles and castles granted for a life), while the dukes of Cilli had seventeen and Barbara thirty-one. Thus, together with her relatives, Queen Barbara was basically wealthier than the king, without taking into consideration the fact that Elizabeth, as the new queen, had no dowry assets in Hungary. And, in fact, the king would not have been able to give them to her, since he himself did have enough.

Albrecht must have known that under such a division of power and with a rich and influential mother-in-law on the scene, ruling would be difficult. Moreover, unlike him, Barbara had a great advantage in that,

because she lived in Hungary, she had created a network of personal contacts, was well-versed in the local situation and mentality and, to top it all, could speak the language of the country. The only solution Albrecht could use was to disable Barbara through the fabricated accusation of a conspiracy with Bohemian lords. On the basis of this accusation, the queen was arrested and deprived of her assets in December 1437. Later on released from custody, she was finally forced to run away to the Kingdom of Poland. This unprecedented measure – the imprisonment and robbing of the queen – represented an unlit fuse leading to the initiation of a war in the Kingdom of Bohemia and Hungary between Polish and Habsburg supporters. Leaving her dowry assets in Bohemia in 1441, Queen Barbara never recovered her great estates in Hungary.

Notes

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1. MNL (Magyar nemzeti levéltár Budapest, The Hungarian National Archive), DF 258 338, ZsO VI, No. 48.
2. ZsO V, No. 835.
3. ZsO IV, No. 166.
4. ZsO IV, No. 1121.
5. ZsO IV, No. 2124, *Lites et res gestae* III, p. 73
6. ZsO VI, No. 444, MNL, DF 202 121.
7. ZsO VII, No. 44, MNL, DF 202 154 and ZsO VII, No. 368, AMB (Archív hlavného mesta SR Bratislava, Archive of Bratislava, the capital of Slovak Republic), No. 904.
8. The mandate addressed to the towns Bratislava and Košice (Kaschau) issued in Uherský Brod as of April 10th, 1421, ordering to settle the New Year's presents to the queen also additionally for the previous years and granting Barbara procuration to collect them, has been preserved. AMB, No. 937, ZsO VIII, No. 385, AMK (Archív mesta Košice, Archive of the city of Košice), *Schwarzenbachiana* 138, MNL, DF 270 180 and ZsO VIII, 386.
9. MNL, DF 202 202, *Házi I/2*, No. 197, ZsO VIII, No. 479.
10. MNL, DF 288 581, fol. 112b, ZsO VIII, No. 886.
11. MNL, DL 11 131, CDH X/6, 415, ZsO VIII, No. 954.
12. ZsO X, No. 121, MNL, DF 270 188; ZsO X, No. 862, MNL, DF 231 449.
13. MTT XII, p. 279, MNL, DL 39 285 (It was rewritten in the Sigismund's charter as of 27 August 1424), ZsO XI, No. 583: 'universas tricesimas nostras in quibuscunque locis sub Corona Regni nostri Hungarie habitas et exigi consuetas'.
14. MNL, DF 287 107, MTT XII, p. 274, ZsO XII, No. 584.
15. MNL, DL 39 286.
16. MNL, DF 287 107, MTT XII, p. 274, ZsO XII, No. 584.
17. MNL, DF 287 547, RI XI, No. 6 666.

18. MNL, DL 39 286.
19. MTT XII, p. 271.
20. MNL, DL 39 284.
21. ZsO XI, No. 613, MNL, DL 11 514.
22. ZsO XI, No. 98, MNL, DF 202 275, Házi I/2, p. 258.
23. MNL, DL 39 286.
24. In Braşov, Barbara issued a charter dated 7 January 1427, MNL, DL 92 709.
25. Tax imposed on Frankfurt: RI XI, Nos. 7326–7336, 7338, the pledging of the Liptov County: MNL, DL 71 678.
26. CDH X/7, p. 639, Engel (1996, I, pp. 313, 334).
27. July 31st, 1425, RI XI/2, No. 6360a. The granting of the fief on 1 August 1425, RI XI/2, No. 6361.
28. *Liber cancellariae Stanislai Ciolek*, p. 481.
29. *Długosz XI*, p. 370.
30. *Cod. epist. Vitoldi*, p. 811.
31. *Cod. epist. Vitoldi*, p. 816.
32. *Mon. Pol. VI*, p. 859, RI XI, No. 7391a.
33. CDH X/8, p. 617.
34. DRTA X, p. 112, No. 64.
35. DRTA XII, p. 165, No. 102.
36. DRTA XI, p. 323, No. 173.
37. DRTA XI, p. 312, No. 169.
38. DRTA XI, p. 325, No. 174, RI XI, No. 11 305a.
39. RI XI, No. 11 305b.
40. DRTA XI, p. 312, note 2.
41. DRTA XI, p. 325, note 1.
42. On 2 January 1432, she wrote to the town of Sopron: Házi I/3, p. 39, while on February 3rd, to the town of Prešov (Eperies): MNL, DF 228 614, both charters contained an identical text: 'Quia serenissimus princeps et dominus dominus Sigismundus eadem gracia predictorum Regnorum Rex dominus et conthoralis noster carissimus universa munera strennalia alias fisco suo Regio circa festum Circumcisionis domini vestri e medio provenire solita mediante suis literis Regalibus superinde confectarum sub certis conditionibus et clausulis literis in eisdem lampidiis expressatis nostre dedit et contulit Reginali maiestati.' It is almost certain that similar letters were delivered to all the royal towns. In case of the city of Bratislava, her chamberlain (Kammermeister) was charged with this task on 9 January 1432: AMB, No. 1224.
43. AMB, No. 1233. For more detail on 'munera strennalia', see Iványi, 1939, pp. 173–176. Sources term this obligatory fee, paid by the royal towns not only to the royal couple, but also to some court dignitaries, as petitions, Bitte, Bete, Bed, Bud, Wud, Bewd, Bwd, and Wued, as well. The New Year's presents existed in other countries, as well. For instance, in Austria, they were called 'Weihnachstkleinodien'. Ibid. p. 175.
44. MNL, DF 286 252.
45. Házi I/3, p. 45, MNL, DF 202 513.
46. MNL, DL 43 907.
47. MNL, DL 13 137. For more details on the list, see Engel (1977, pp. 194–204).

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8

The Courtly Accounts of Prince Sigismund Jagiello (Late 15th to Early 16th Centuries) and Their Historical Context

Petr Kozák

Accounts are considered an outstanding source not only in the field of economic history. Accounting records are a notable source of information on everyday life and cultural and social history perceived in a broad sense. They also shed light on a wide range of topics connected with traditionally defined political history, with research into legal and administrative structures to the fore. Furthermore, from a factual point of view, the source appears to be objective – an honest scribe responsible for bookkeeping had no desire to improve (or worsen) the reality or celebrate his employer. He did not subordinate his daily work of recording incomes and expenditures to any literary ambitions (whether he had such ambitions or not) or ethical or any other assessment criteria, nor did he project his or other people's world-view into the text. The result of his efforts did not serve as a moral appeal or give rise to claims or future rights as was the case with documents such as charters. Unfortunately, that is precisely why accounts represent a very rarely preserved source. Accounts were considered primarily to be a secondary record kept in order to keep current incomes and expenditures under control. Thus the utility value of the accumulated information they contained was, for practical purposes, time-limited. The accounting material soon became outdated and so also superfluous, which often resulted – whether intentionally or because of mere loss of interest – in its demise. At present such accounts are preserved only as the result of random survival, even in the most advanced medieval and early modern archives.

In general, the number of preserved accounts of all kinds declines as time passes, but there are also significant geographical differences. In the west and south of Latin Europe, which could build on the heritage of ancient Rome, the oldest preserved material of such a type dates to as early as the first half of the 12th century (Sprandel, 1995, pp. 508–510). A significant expansion in the use of written accounting records occurred in the immediately following period. Western European historians have access to account books from the 13th and 14th centuries, which originated not only in the organisationally advanced offices of secular and religious rulers, but also in fast-developing town offices or even as a result of some local authority's property management. However, the situation in Central and East-Central Europe is significantly less diverse. There, far fewer medieval accounting records have survived, even in the case of the accounts of the ruler's courts. Finding the reason for this is not as easy as it could seem. Some of the older accounting records probably ceased to exist some time (shorter or longer) after losing their primary evidentiary and control function. Nevertheless, this does not explain everything as the deficit of mainly medieval accounting matter in this vast area is too consistent. It is more likely that it bears witness to a certain civilizational delay on the way from the Rhine to the Elbe, the Vistula and farther on to the east.

About a half a century ago Czech historian Václav Černý (1952, pp. 121–133), on the basis of a few surviving fragments, still argued that keeping written accounting records was quite common in the Czech lands in the Middle Ages, that is to say there should once have existed a vast number of accounts of various types which now do not survive. However, current research offers a different explanation. Mark Mersiowsky (2000, pp. 337–345), in his monograph concerned with medieval accounting deals with the Rhineland and Westphalia – areas, beyond doubt, culturally and economically more advanced than the territories of Central and Eastern Europe. He emphasised in particular the fact that during the Middle Ages even in those areas accounting was only partially kept in writing. Abstract calculations such as addition, subtraction, division and multiplication were, even at the advanced courts of rulers, very often carried out by concrete visualisations of the calculations for which they used numeric boards with numeric stones. Accounting carried out with these aids necessitated the presence of one or more witnesses who oversaw the accuracy of the accounting process and also guaranteed the factual correctness of the result (Mersiowsky). The written formalization of administration was quite slow and the development of Central and Eastern Europe generally followed the

more advanced parts of the Continent with a substantial delay, thus we can develop Mersiovsky's thesis much further and claim that the probably quite primitive accounting in some parts of Europe had kept its unwritten form for a rather long time. For that matter, the process 'written records – control – archiving, possibly cessation' is quite similar to the process 'visual calculation – control – memory, possibly forgetting'. In practice, the transition from unwritten to written recording was a technical circumstance resulting from the increasing complexity of the state, village or estate administration. This hypothesis is also supported by the conclusions reached by Lithuanian historian Rimvydas Petrauskas arising from his study of the preserved medieval accounting matter from the Polish-Lithuanian region.

In his opinion, medieval accounts, or more precisely written accounting records, in fact might not have necessarily been kept in coherent, uninterrupted sequences. Thus, if the accounting material from a certain period is missing, we cannot be content with the general assertion that it existed but was merely not preserved. The written record of incomes and expenditures requires an advanced and well-functioning financial system as well as sufficient scribal personnel. The 'sudden' emergence of account books in a certain region could thus signal particular structural changes, and, on the other hand, their sudden non-existence could reflect the same. Petrauskas, in addition to other things, convincingly proved that the court accounts of the Jagiellonian rulers in Lithuania originated, contrary to historians' original assumptions, as late as during the reign of Grand Duke Alexander I Jagiellon (1492–1506), towards the end of the Middle Ages. The institutionalisation of these records at the Lithuanian ducal court coincided with the reform of the chancellery and the financial system of the country. The natural model became the account books traditionally kept by the Jagiellonian Kings in Poland, which Alexander as well as his closest courtiers knew very well (Antanavičius & Petrauskas, 2007, pp. xi–xxiii, xxxv–xlvi).

The accounts created at the courts of the rulers from the Jagiellonian dynasty represent a phenomenon whose significance extends beyond the borders of the late medieval Polish state. Petrauskas pointed out an interesting connection – the oldest preserved court accounts of the Polish rulers come from approximately the same period as the accounts kept by the chancellery of the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order in Prussia underwent improvement, that is to say at the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries. The everyday lives of both neighbouring regional powers were linked not only by conflicts but also by mutually beneficial cultural transfer. Systematic records of incomes and expenditures of the

kings of Poland and their courts are connected – certainly not by coincidence – with the change of dynasties on the Kraków throne. The oldest preserved court accounts come from 1388, thus their emergence in fact corresponds with start of Władysław II Jagiełło's rule in Poland (1386–1399). The need to manage the ruler's finances better could relate to Władysław's personal character. Nevertheless, we should keep in mind also the insecure position of the new monarch, who was actually considered only a husband of the 'natural queen' Jadwiga-Hedwig (1384–1399) at the beginning of his reign.

In the case of the account books connected with the reigns of the individual members of the Jagiellonian family it is not only their historiographically recorded existence that is exceptional, but also how well preserved they are. Jagiellonian court accounts were exceptionally carefully archived, which was not common at that period. It seems that it was not only the result of advances in the development of administrative structures, but more importantly of a certain specific approach that the Jagiellonian dynasty adopted towards this type of control material in general. We can find better or worse preserved court account books in all the countries which found themselves under the rule of the Jagiellonian rulers for longer or shorter periods – that is to say not only in Poland but also in Lithuania (even though Lithuanian accounting did not develop until the reign of Grand Duke Alexander, the surviving Polish sources organically contain material relating to the Lithuanian state), in the Lands of the Bohemian Crown and in the Kingdom of Hungary. As far as Poland and Lithuania are concerned, at present we share material providing continuous coverage of almost the whole period of the Jagiellonian dynasty reign.¹ Despite the fact that the archives of the Hungarian and Bohemian Jagiellonians fatally suffered during the events following the Mohács defeat of King Louis Jagiellon by the Ottoman Turks (1526), the accounting records of King Vladislaus II from the years 1494–1495 and of King Louis II from the years 1525–1526 have been preserved up to the present day.² In the second half of the 15th century, under the direct influence of the Jagiellonians, a written formalization (and consequent careful archive) of the accounting process was also carried out in Mazovia, which was ruled by fiefdoms of the Polish Jagiellonian rulers from the old Piast dynasty.³ The fragments of the preserved accounts from the Hungarian (and hence also Bohemian) court can be supplemented with the accounting material that emerged between the years 1500 and 1508 at the court of the Bishop of Eger (Kovács, 1992).

Written accounting records from the courts of the Polish rulers from the period before the reign of Vladislaus II Jagiellon, that is to

say before 1386, do not exist at present and almost the same can be said in the Hungarian and Bohemian contexts. The above-mentioned fragments of accounts of the Hungarian and Bohemian rulers from the Jagiellonian period are also the only medieval sources of their kind available to contemporary historians. This observation is fully valid for the Kingdom of Hungary (Horogszegi & Rábai, 2009–2010, p. 102; Király, 2010, p. 281). From Bohemia, only one small fragment of accounts kept by the kitchen-master of Emperor Charles IV has been preserved, and that by accident (Bartoš, 1945). The Luxembourg dynasty and the Hungarian Angevin dynasty came from more advanced regions in which accounting, including the accounting records kept at the ruler's courts, was more developed. Yet, almost nothing of the anticipated accounting treasure has been preserved in the archives of the Kings of Bohemia and Hungary, in contrast to the late medieval archives of the Kings of Poland. This provides at least evidence of a very different approach from that followed by the Jagiellonians. Moreover, in the context of the Polish-Lithuanian coexistence, where it can be proved that the Lithuanian court accounts originated after Alexander Jagiellon began his reign in 1492 while the Jagiellonian tradition was more than a hundred years older, requires caution in designing hypotheses and applying analogies.

Some form of written court accounts was probably used in Bohemia and Hungary during the Luxembourg period. In addition to the fragment of the accounts of Charles IV's kitchen-master, it is suggested also by a comparatively rich survival of accounting material produced by the activities of other institutions.⁴ However, it is not very easy to assert whether their predecessors, the rulers from the Přemyslid, Arpád or Piast dynasties kept written accounting records at all and the presumption that they did remains mere speculation. The preservation of the Jagiellonian court accounts is exceptional also in the context of late medieval Hungary and Bohemia, where the situation was considerably less favourable compared to the Polish-Lithuanian state. The lands of the Bohemian Crown represented a less important part in the collection of the individual state units from which the mosaic of Jagiellonian Europe was pieced together around 1500. The quoted fragments of court accounts from the reign of the kings Vladislaus II and Louis II reflect the situation in Hungary rather than in Bohemia, where the Jagiellonian rulers and their courts dwelled only occasionally after 1490. The medieval court accounts from Bohemia are missing almost entirely. With only slight exaggeration it could even be said that the most interesting accounting 'evidence' one way or another connected with the lands of the Bohemian Crown was left behind by travelling foreign aristocrats

rather than by any of the Bohemian rulers.⁵ From the perspective of central institutions of royal power in Bohemia during the Jagiellonian period, only the complete volumes of the Kutná Hora mint accounts have survived until today, but these can only substitute for the court accounts to a limited extent.⁶ Therefore the court accounting books of Prince Sigismund Jagiellon, preserved in their entirety for (1493) 1500–1507, are extremely significant.

Sigismund, known to posterity mainly as the King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania and as Sigismund I the Old (1506–1548), belonged among the princes of the Jagiellonian dynasty, which reached one of the peaks of its power around 1500. However, Sigismund was in quite a difficult position at the beginning of his reign. The Jagiellonians controlled a geographically considerable area of Central and East-Central Europe and reigned over a number of states – Poland, Lithuania, Hungary and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown, but these had been divided among his older brothers Vladislaus (1471–1516), John Albert (1492–1501) and Alexander (1501–1506). Even the youngest of the Jagiellonian siblings Frederick (1468–1503), who had been quickly climbing up the ladder of the Church hierarchy, seemed to have a more promising future ahead of him. In quick succession he had become the Bishop of Kraków, Archbishop of Gniezno and finally Cardinal. Thus, during the last years of the 15th century it was only the second youngest son, Sigismund, who found himself slowly becoming a prince without any real prospects to establish his own power base. The thorny question of provision and power establishment of a Jagiellonian dynasty member became an issue regularly discussed during Jagiellonian family gatherings. Many plans were devised, but they remained on paper because of their fantastical or politically adventurous nature. In 1498 at last came an offer from the, then senior, member of the dynasty. The offer resulted from lengthy family meetings and no less difficult talks with the estates of individual countries.

In 1499, Vladislaus, King of Bohemia and Hungary, who moved his residence to Buda, granted his younger brother Sigismund the fiefdom of the Duchy of Głogów (Glogau) in Silesia and in 1501 the fiefdom of the Duchy of Opava (Troppau) on the Moravian-Silesian border. Both of these countries were part of the Bohemian Crown. Sigismund stayed in the Hungarian capital and enjoyed his brother's hospitality up until 1501. After the death of his brother John Albert, Sigismund tried to gain the Polish throne, however he was not successful – at that time the Grand Duke of Lithuania Alexander became the King of Poland. Afterwards Sigismund took up residence in his newly gained Silesian

possessions and tried to acquire at least a financial share in his father's inheritance. In 1504, Sigismund's brother King Vladislaus appointed him his deputy for the northern part of the Lands of the Bohemian Crown – Sigismund became the governor of Silesia and Lusatia. The Jagiellonian Prince tried very hard to present himself in roles traditionally connected with the image of a good and successful ruler, thus the heart of his court comprised representatives of prominent Polish and Lithuanian aristocratic families. In 1506, when yet another of the siblings King Alexander died unexpectedly, Sigismund at last managed to secure the rule of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. He gradually surrendered the countries and offices gained by the grace of King Vladislaus.⁷

The uniqueness of the court accounts of Prince Sigismund does not result solely from the fact that they are the only preserved medieval court accounts of one of the Silesian dukes. For that matter, the question is how was accounting practised at courts of small Silesian territorial rulers, or even if it was practised at all. Sigismund was, first of all, a member of the Jagiellonian dynasty and the future Polish-Lithuanian ruler. The whole Jagiellonian dynasty realm thus served him as a power arena. The accounts justify this seemingly banal presumption. Their remarkably wide geographical scope connects the Polish and Lithuanian countries as well as Hungary and Bohemia. Both the above-mentioned accounts considerably expand the small number of surviving late medieval ruler's accounts.

The source written in Latin was discovered by modern Polish and Hungarian historians as early as at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The credit for this goes to the Polish historian Adolf Pawiński, who was the first to work with them, and to his Hungarian colleague Adorján Divéky. They both recognised the potential of the source very rapidly. Pawiński offered the public a renaissance romantic fresco of everyday life from the later favourite king's youth and in the appendix of his book he was also the first to publish a thematic selection of accounting records from the Polish-Lithuanian region (Pawiński, 1893, pp. 233–272). Two decades later Divéky had different ambitions. He decided to publish *in extenso* the part of the preserved matter concerned directly with old Hungary, that is to say records from the period of Sigismund's life in the chambers of the royal residence at Buda (up to the year 1501), as well as all the records of transactions located within the Hungarian territory during the following, shorter stays of the Jagiellonian Prince. Divéky disregarded the records that were not created directly in connection with one of Prince Sigismund's stays in Hungary

or were, in one way or another, connected with Hungary (e.g. sending messengers to King Vladislaus in Buda etc.). Thus Divéky in the well-established academic series *Magyar Történelmi Tár*, which from the first half of the 19th century intended to systematically publish Hungarian source matter deposited within as well as outside the Hungarian borders, edited about a quarter of the contents of the accounting books of Prince Sigismund (Divéky, 1914a).

Even though both historians invested great efforts in editing the manuscripts of these accounting books, thereby making a considerable part of their content available to a broad professional and lay public, and Divéky also published several partial studies based on this material over the following years (Divéky, 1914b; 1920; 1960), awareness of the existence of the accounting books was slowly falling into oblivion. Polish historiography was quite content to quote the work of Pawiński, and not even Divéky's more complex edition gained the acceptance that we would expect considering the nature of the work. Moreover, the circle of historians working on the court accounts of Prince Sigismund became noticeably regional. Thus any accounts not published in the editions were almost not used at all and, as far as Bohemia is concerned, there was no awareness of their existence whatsoever, even though they represent an immensely important information source for its history.

The cause of this situation should be probably seen in the long-term thematic and emotional preferences of Polish, Hungarian and Czech historians. For a long time, Czech historiography was concerned mainly with the nationally Czech heart of the old Bohemian state, and it only began to take the existence of the other Crown lands (Silesia and Lusatia) into consideration as late as at the end of the 20th century. Moreover, the Jagiellonian subject matter did not enjoy much popularity for a long time and the period of 'weak' kings Vladislaus and Louis was considered a mere interlude between the 'heroic' Hussite period (1419–1471) and the pre-White Mountain struggle of the estates with the Habsburgs (1526–1620). Similarly among Hungarian historians, antipathy prevailed towards 'weak' 'foreigners' on the Hungarian throne who, according to the traditional ideas, squandered the inheritance of the 'energetic' Matthias Corvinus (1458–1490) and opened the floodgates for the national catastrophe of the post-Mohacs period (after 1526). The complicated attitude towards the inheritance of the old Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which at the end of the 18th century collapsed under the dictates of the surrounding powers, was also long affected by the Polish relation with the Jagiellonian monarchy. Furthermore the movement of Polish borders from the East to the West

after World War II, multiplied by ideological pressure from the Soviet Union, led to the attempt at systematic revision of the myth of the 'origins of the state', the heart of which was traced back to the Piast and not the Jagiellonian state.

Revived and free from national prejudice, the interest in the Jagiellonian period is at present noticeable in the Czech, Hungarian and Polish, as well as Lithuanian historiography. The preserved Jagiellonian court accounts have also been examined more methodically, some of them were also newly published – the most active in this field are firstly Lithuanian historians, and recently in a critical edition of the accounting material connected with the reign of Alexander Jagiellon and the Lithuanian court of the last Jagiellon, the accounts of Sigismund II Augustus (1548–1569) was finally published.⁸ The court accounts of Prince Sigismund returned to the centre of historical attention as well. Besides my short studies (Kozák, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2009, 2012a, 2012b, 2013) the topic was also dealt with by Hungarian historians Krisztina Rábai and Zoltán Horogszegi, who not only published a series of praiseworthy analytic insights (Rábai, 2007; 2009; 2010a; 2010b; Horogszegi, 2007a; 2007b; Horogszegi & Rábai, 2007; 2009–2010), but also resumed Divéky's work and compiled an edition of selected accounts of Sigismund's court, in which the Latin records connected with the stay of the Jagiellonian Prince in Hungary were translated into Hungarian (Horogszegi & Rábai, 2005). However, the limited selection (restricted to Hungarian visits) may be considered problematic and the use of Divéky's edition, which is one hundred years old and has naturally become a bit methodically outdated, is also an issue. Furthermore, the comparison of Divéky's transcription with the original has revealed many mistakes, which occasionally lead even to substantial semantic shifts. The significance of the source, which by its nature extends beyond the limited frameworks of partial national historiographies, the fact that it is known only through subjective selections, and finally the methodological and professional outdatedness of the most important of these works, all stand behind the decision to prepare an edition of the complete court accounts of Sigismund Jagiellon. The goal was achieved in 2014 when a new edition was published (Kozák, 2014).

The accounting system applied at the court of Sigismund Jagiellon, was not especially complicated and it corresponds to the general trends of that period, when in addition to the main accounting books, specialised secondary accounting books were also kept. As far as the court accountancy of Prince Sigismund is concerned, there existed a wide range of these secondary accounting books. Even though almost no secondary

records are still extant today, the main accounting books, which regularly made references to individual specialised registers, are available. Thus the sources mention registers *ad conscribendum equos curiensium*, *ad viam*, *completum*, *cubiculariorum*, *curiensium*, *dispensatorum*, *equorum*, *examinatum*, *specierum* and *summarum*. The purpose of some of these registers may be somewhat disputable, however, in most cases the preserved titles are quite obvious and bring to mind accounting books used for special records of incomes and expenditures related to certain situations (travel register), working operations, commodities or – more often – specific social and socio-professional groups. Many entries in the main accounting books are accompanied by a closing notice *ut in ipsius registro stat*, which indicates the existence of further, not specifically mentioned secondary accounting volumes recording the activities of various servant personnel. The actual form of the secondary books could have been quite variable. Some could have been only simple paper sheaves or files run up in quick writing.⁹ The fact that nearly nothing from these registers has remained preserved would seem to lend support to this assumption. However, one thing is certain. Records of incomes and expenditures of Sigismund's court show an advanced system of accounting craftsmanship that, without any doubt, followed the models the Jagiellonian Prince and his closest courtiers encountered in Kraków or Buda. Therefore the well-developed accounting system at the court of the weakest of the Jagiellonians gives evidence also about the quality of Jagiellonian accounting in general.

The only surviving secondary book kept at the court of Prince Sigismund is the *Regestrum curiensium*, which is also mentioned repeatedly in the text of the main accounting books. As the title suggests, it includes records of payments made to the members of the formally defined category of courtiers (*curienses*). Each courtier had his own section which, in addition to the more or less regularly paid salary, also recorded the number of the accompanying riders with which he served, the date of his acceptance to the court and the date of the termination of his service or, in case of an unexpected demise the date of his death too. The book was kept at the turn of the years 1509/1510, therefore entries about the termination of court services are uncommon. Hence this volume is analogical, but nearly a half century older, to the *marshal book*, kept in the years 1547–1572, which the leading expert on the accounting books of the Jagiellonian rulers, Urszula Borkowska (2011, p. 128), incorrectly considered to be the only preserved copy of its kind.

To date, only two manuscripts of the main accounting books of Sigismund's court kept throughout the years 1500–1504 and 1504–1507,

as well as the above-mentioned secondary book including entries from the years 1493–1509/1510, have been preserved.¹⁰ The surviving books of court accounts inform us about no-longer existing (save the above-quoted exception) specialised registers, and they also include references to older, also lost, volumes of the main accounting books from the period before 1500. At present we cannot reliably determine the number of registers, whether there were only one or possibly more volumes. We might not be wrong to think in terms of more than one book because the source itself uses the singular (*registrum antiquum*) as well as plural (*registra antiqua*) forms. The year 1493, which opens the *Regestrum curiensium*, can most probably be considered the year in which the history of independently kept accounting of Prince Sigismund's court began. At that time Christopher Szydłowiecki, in reality as well as on paper was the first of the courtiers, returned from pilgrimage to the Holy Land (Bogucka, 2000, p. 398; Kieszkowski, 1912, pp. 165–166). First of all, only several months had passed since the death of King Casimir IV Jagiellon (1447–1492), which redefined Sigismund's personal position within the Jagiellonian dynasty – despite his difficult position and problems securing reasonable provision at that time the young Prince was transformed into a functioning unit independent of his, until recently, dominant father's authority. Excluding Christopher Szydłowiecki, who, accompanied by a company of eight riders, served as Sigismund's courtier approximately until 1493, then the register of courtiers shows that other *curienses* were enrolled shortly before the Prince's departure to Buda in 1498. Thus the succinct speech of the accounting records gives significant insight into the modest life Sigismund Jagiellon was initially forced to live.

The structure of all three accounting books is rather simple. The income or funds flowing in, expenses covering common everyday operations of the court and salaries paid out to persons according to their office (in case of the register of courtiers naturally only expenses related to this specific social group) were recorded chronologically. Incomes and expenses were not separated. Only the first pages of both the main accounting books include lists of chronologically ordered incomes which could be found also within the respective sections of the main accounting books. The records were kept in paragraphs one under the other and the sums involved were not separated in any way (e.g. writing them towards the margin of the sheet), which shows that the scribes did not make even such a simple effort to increase the comprehensibility of the records. Visually, the records in the main books were divided into specific parts only according to localities where the accounting transactions (incomes and expenses) occurred. The only departure from this

rule was the inclusion of headings based on the titles of social and socio-professional groups when salaries were being paid out. This occurred especially during preparations for longer travels or simply when cash arrived into the Prince's forever-hungry treasury. For completeness, it needs to be added that the preserved book *Regestrum curiensium* is structured according to individual courtiers and within these sections the scribe once again structures entries according to the localities where the payments were made.

Funds flowed into Sigismund's treasury depending on the sources of his income. These sources changed over time (simply put, his income grew), thus the management of the cash became much more complicated. Generally speaking, occasional one-off financial injections from Sigismund's ruling siblings or loans granted by different creditors, individuals and towns were organised *ad hoc* and in the presence of authorised persons. Income (from fiscal sources to the income from minting) belonging to Sigismund as Duke of Głogów and Opava was sent by the governors of both territories and the transport of capital from his possessions and claims in Poland, usually administered by competent officers, was carried out in a similar way. During Sigismund's stays in both the metropolises of the Jagiellonian realm, the representatives of the two most powerful banking houses – the Thurzó family in Buda and the Boner family in Kraków – took over roles as the main guarantors of income into the Prince's treasury. For instance, after Sigismund's departure from Hungary in 1501, the receipt of his finances was organised more or less as follows: George Thurzó, authorised by the King Vladislaus, paid Prince Sigismund his assigned allowance through one of his agents from Buda, who then delivered the cash directly into the hands of Sigismund's *dispensator*.

The accounting books provide expressive evidence of the unhappy situation that prevailed in terms of the currency used, which was characteristic of the Central and Eastern European region at the end of the Middle Ages. In addition to Hungarian, Bohemian and Lithuanian coins of varied nominal value, naturally there can also be found different coinages from the Holy Roman Empire, as well as from various productions by the local ducal and town mints in Silesia. For that matter, even Sigismund himself minted several types of coins, since his minting privileges represented an essential part of his income. The Table 8.1 attempts to provide a comprehensible summary of the different types of currency found in the accounting books.

Therefore it is easy to understand the laments of the town council of the Silesian capital Wrocław (Breslau) over the monetary situation,

Table 8.1 Types of currency

Latin term	English term
Denarius	denier/penny
denarius albus	white denier/penny
denarius Hungaricalis	Hungarian denier/penny
Florenus	florin/ducat
florenus in auro forme Italice	florin of Italian type
florenus Hungaricalis	Hungarian florin/ducat
florenus Rinensis	Rhenish guilder
Grossus	groschen
grossus albus	white groschen
grossus Alemanus alias lichtyszyc	German groschen ¹¹
grossus Boemicalis	Bohemian groschen
grossus Glogoviensis	Glogau (Głogów) groschen
grossus Glogoviensis novus	new Glogau (Głogów) groschen
grossus latus	thick groschen
grossus Lithuanicus	Lithuanian groschen
grossus Misnensis	Meissen groschen
grossus Polonialis	Polish groschen/grosz
grossus Polonialis medians	Polish half groschen/grosz
grossus schreckenberger	Schreckenberger groschen
grossus Wratislaviensis	Breslau (Wrocław) groschen
grossus Wratislaviensis novus	new Breslau (Wrocław) groschen
minuta pecunia	small change
minuta pecunia Hungaricalis	Hungarian small change
minuta pecunia Lithuanica	Lithuanian small change
Ortt	ort = ¼ daler
Philar	fillér/heller
Ternarius	ternar = 3 pfennig

which did not facilitate trading relations at all. For that matter, the text of the accounting books tellingly illustrates the complexity of the monetary conditions at that time. The scribe responsible for keeping records of incomes and expenditures of Sigismund's court regularly quoted exact exchange rates between different types of currency and also distinguished the quality of different issues of the same coin. He converted the sums of money into ducats, which in most cases did not represent a real means of payment, but in the chaos of so many monetary systems served as an objective unit of account. Sigismund's treasury received cash from different areas and thus also in different currencies which sometimes made the process of bookkeeping exceptionally complicated. Especially in the first months after his relocation from Buda to Silesia, it is impossible not to notice that the bookkeeper/scribe had considerable

difficulties in fulfilling his duty to count everything correctly, as he had to revise and correct the records, sometimes several times. To make his work easier he used subtotals, which he regularly wrote at the end of the folio. The objective accuracy of the bookkeeping was checked on occasion by Steward Christopher Szydłowiecki, who also entered personally written reports on the results of such inspections into the main accounting books. Thus we can conclude that the edited accounting books of Sigismund Jagiellon are a key source for understanding the financial and monetary system in the East-Central European region.

The accounting books, which recorded the income and expenditure related to the running of Prince Sigismund's court on a virtually daily basis, are at the same time outstanding evidence of the structure and function of the society that surrounded a member of an important European dynasty at the end of the Middle Ages. Exceptionally interesting is the sight of the specific status of a ruler within a court organism and his enormous energy, during a period when his situation was transformed from the initially overshadowed prince, seemingly without much chance to gain any real power, into the leading claimant to no fewer than two Jagiellonian thrones. As a result, his modest company grew over time and, as his prospects improved, more and more persons keen to serve the Jagiellonian Prince were attracted to his court. Since Sigismund took over control of the Duchies of Głogów and Opava, his court was originally dominated mainly by persons with a good knowledge of Silesia, its life and institutions. Later, new members of the court came from Poland and Lithuania. As a result, Prince Sigismund's court in the period before 1506 was not Silesian and least of all regional to Głogów or Opava. It was a court of a self-confident member of the Jagiellonian dynasty, which helped its master to accomplish his broader Polish-Lithuanian power ambitions (Kozák, 2008a, pp. 173–214; 2008c).

The accounts are exceptionally detailed, in many ways more detailed than, for instance, similar records created at the court of the Lithuanian Grand Duke and later Polish King Alexander Jagiellon. Thus it paints a picture of the court not only in a 'narrow' sense but it also sheds light on the extent and structure of the court in a 'broad' sense.¹² As expected, the 'narrow' court was internally hierarchized and its socially ranked division became more complicated as it expanded in response to Sigismund's changing position. The accounts also show how the individual, formally divided categories (derived from the social background and generation) of the court elite were not immutable much less impermeable. At the top were courtiers in the literal sense (*curiensis*), who served with a fixed company of riders (the number of 'horses' also

reflected their status). The second-ranking category as far as prestige is concerned were chamberlains (*cubicularius*). This group shows the highest degree of change. 'Typical' chamberlains served without the company of riders. However, this group soon divided itself into chamberlains without horses (*sine equis*) and chamberlains who were allowed the company of two riders (*in equis, ad equos serviens*). In isolated cases we also encounter junior chamberlains (*cubicularius iunior*). Chamberlains accompanied by armed riders sometimes overlap with the category *curienses*, however this is not consistent and the accounts always indicate a certain social distance between these two groups within the court society. The socially and functionally lowest level of the 'narrow' court belonged to the noble youth serving as pages (*laicellus*). Between the pages and chamberlains appeared also the so-called 'bulls' (*bikowie*) who, it seems, filled the social and probably the age gap between the two categories. This is at least partly indicated by the entry that explicitly speaks about pages some of whom were 'bulls' and others were persons of lower social status.¹³

The accounting books include references to higher and lower court offices, but not very frequently, and therefore we may assume that the bookkeeper scribe did not mention these offices systematically. Categorization into the one of the above-mentioned formal groups into which court society was internally divided represented a key (not least as far as the salary paid was concerned) distinguishing feature. Thus in the edited source, Sigismund's most important courtier Christopher Szydłowiecki only rarely appears as steward (*magister curie*), even though he held this position. The source also mentions the marshal (*marsalcus*), master of kitchen (*magister coquine*), cupbearer (*pincerna, schynek*), dapifer (*trucces*) or carver (*incisor mense*). Looking at offices reserved for low-born persons, we may mention also mint masters (*mynczmagister*), cellar masters (*celarius, pywnyczy*), key-bearers (*clawiger*), commander of a regiment (*rothmagister, rothmystr*) or a provider (*provisor*), who was responsible for supplying provisions to the court kitchen.

The 'broad' court comprised a varied society of many different servants of different social status as well as professions. The soul of Prince Sigismund and the members of his court were entrusted to chaplains (*capellanus*) and naturally they had also their confessor (*confessor*). Their physical health was looked after by a physician (*doctor medicus*), a surgeon (*cirurgicus*), a barber (*barbitonsor*), a bath attendant (*balneator, lazyenny*) and a druggist (*apotekarius*), from whom persons charged by the Prince bought not only various herbal mixtures and ointments but also sealing wax. Proper running of the office and keeping accounts

was the responsibility of a bachelor (*baccalarius*), a secretary (*secretarius*), a notary (*notarius*) and a scribe (*scriptor*), money passed through the hands of first one, then later through more dispensers (*dispensator*). The appropriate appearance of the prince's entourage was taken care of by washerwomen (*ablutrix*, *praczką*), clothing was repaired and new pieces were made by a cobbler (*sutor*) and a tailor (*sartor*), there are also regular appearances by a furrier (*pellifex*), a strapmaker (*rymarz*), a goldsmith (*aurifaber*) and a blacksmith (*faber*), who according to the tradition of the period also served as a vet. Special care was taken with the food, and the court enjoyed the services of a number of chefs (*cocus*, *coquus*) and cooks (*kuchczyk*), there was also a baker (*pyekarz*) or a butcher (*carnifex*). Supplies of venison for the Prince's table was provided by a group of hunters (*myslywiecz*, *venator*), archers (*sagittarius*, *strzelec*), birders (*auceps*), falconers (*falconista*), saker falconers (*raroszynek*), and even fishermen (*piscator*) are mentioned. The arms and armour of the higher levels of court society were maintained by an armourer (*plathnyersz*) and a gunsmith (*puskarz*). Special care was given to horses and waggoners – the accounting books record ostlers (*agaso*), coachmen (*kothczy*) and waggoners (*auriga*), carmen (*phurman*, *vector*), wheelwrights (*currifex*, *stelmach*), carpenters (*carpentarius*) and persons entrusted with the provision of the fodder supply (*obroczynek*). At times it was also necessary to use the services of members of other specialised professions – shearmen (*tonsor*), tubing masters (*turmagister*), locksmiths (*serifaber*, *slosarz*), glassblowers (*vitricator*), painters (*pictor*), bricklayers (*murator*, *murasz*), cabinetmakers (*mensator*), illuminators (*illuminator*) and for instance interpreters (*interpres*). The everyday running of the court could not do without various knaves (*olomek*) and men performing menial work (the accounting book refers to them as *orosz*, or *horosz*).

Thus, before the historian's eyes parades a varied society spiced up by different guests, ambassadors, diplomats, friends, common and noble supplicants, participants in feasts and evening events with a glass of wine, beer, a game of cards or dice entertained by jesters (*blasen*, *histrion*), conjurers (*kuglarz*), lutenists (*citharedus*) or flautists (*fistulator*) and possibly also by dwarfs (*karzel*) – Lilliputians whose domain included responsibility for the Prince's toilette. The courtiers' entourage on horseback served not only a display function but it also created a real army whose main duty was the protection of the court and, if necessary, they were ready to fight under the standard of their Lord (Borkowska, 2011, pp. 152–154). However, in his services Prince Sigismund had also lowly catchpoles (*drab*, or *drap*), guards (*custos*) and lansquenets (*lanczknight*).

Whenever the court moved, the arrival of the Jagiellonian Prince was publicly announced by buglers (*tubicena*), pipers (*pisczek*) and drummers (*bambenicza*, *tympanista*), as well as outriders (*foritharz*) and persons charged with arranging for lodgings. There were also messengers (*nuncius*) and couriers (*cursor*) through which Prince Sigismund stayed in touch with the Polish, Lithuanian and Hungarian courts and with the key players of the Silesian political stage as well as across the territories of the Bohemian and Hungarian Crown more widely. In addition to the members of Sigismund's *familie ducis*, the accounts also refer to courtiers and servants in the services of other Jagiellonians, rulers of smaller Central-European territorial units or important aristocrats, for instance Margrave George of Brandenburg-Ansbach, dukes of Saxonia and Silesia or the more important politicians and officials from individual countries ruled by the Jagiellonians. These references are even more important because, as in Silesia, they represent exceptionally rare surviving source material of this kind.

It is obvious that the court accounting books of Prince Sigismund Jagiello are not only an excellent source of information of the more traditionally understood history of events and historic topography. They represent an inexhaustible repository of detailed information for the field of cultural history and late medieval everyday life. The account books offer an abundance of themes that could be studied. We could, for instance, mention the phenomenon of concubines and bastards living at the court, various festivities including the Prince's ceremonial arrivals into towns (*adventus domini principis*), hunts, knight tournaments or animals and their provision. Problems and issues would surely be connected with the residence of the court and communications, as well as for instance with health, diseases and dying. However, the preserved accounting books are primarily an excellent source for the analysis of monetary relations, prices of commodities and services and the economic context in general – and all of this covering the wide geographical horizons of East-Central Europe.

These horizons extend from the Danube in the South to the Baltic Sea in the North, from Dresden in the West to Moscow in the East. The activities, interests and daily life of the Jagiellonian Prince further connected this territory with Western Europe, Scandinavia and the empires of the Ottoman Sultans and Crimean Tatar Khans. Moreover, the source is even more detailed than the correspondence from the courts of Sigismund's siblings ruling as the Kings of Poland and the Grand Dukes of Lithuania. The edition so offers a broad spectrum of topics to be used.

Notes

Accounts resulting from the activities of the Teutonic Order are, of course, much older, but truly systematic record of incomes and expenditures carried out by the Grand Master's chancellery can be observed only from the turn of the 14th and 15th century. See R. Petrauskas in the introduction to an edition Antanavičius & Petrauskas, 2007, pp. XXXV–XXXVI. The above-mentioned accounting books created in the chancellery of the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order were published by E. Joachim (1896).

1. Most of the preserved court accounts of the Polish-Lithuanian rulers are available through in published editions. For the accounts of Władysław II Jagiełło, see F. Piekosiński (1896); anonymous writer (1854); H. Wajs (1993). Materials from the reign of King Casimir IV Jagiellon were published by S. Krzyżanowski (1909–1913); R. Grodecki (1951); S. Gawęda, Z. Perzanowski and A. Strzelecka (1960); G. Rutkowska (2005); A. Pawiński (1897a). The Lithuanian accounts of Alexander Jagiellon have already been quoted and were published by D. Antanavičius and R. Petrauskas, who continued the edition of A. Pawiński (1897b), which included accounting material related to Alexander's reign in Poland. The accounting books from the reign of Sigismund I and his successor Sigismund II Augustus were reprinted by A. Wajs and H. Wajs (1997); O. Łaszczyńska (1952, 1955); D. Antanavičius and S. Narbutas (2009, 2012); A. Chmiel (1911) and J. Garbaciak (1974).
2. The first fragments of Vladislaus II's account books were published by J. Ch. Engel (1797). The extant accounting registers of King Louis II Jagiellon were made available by V. Fraknoi (1877) and J. Ch. Engel (1809).
3. The accounts related to the reign of Duke Janusz II of Mazovia was published by J. Senkowski (1959).
4. For Bohemia, some examples of the edited town accounts, registers of town collection and merchant's account books, accounts composed at religious institutions, centers of order provinces administration, accounts of royal burgraves and aristocratic castles: K. Urbánková & V. Wihodová (2008); J. Hemmerle (1967); F. Graus (1956); A. L. Krejčík (1949); J. Pelikán (1948); B. Mendl (1935); V. Chaloupecký (1912); T. Lukawsky (1911); R. Jecht (1905–1910); J. Šusta (1909); T. Antl (1900); J. Neuwirth (1890); C. Grünhagen (1860).
5. For instance, detailed accounts from the travels of Henry IV (1399–1413), the future King of England, to Prussia and the Holy Land have been preserved. During his travels at that time, Duke Henry and his retinue also visited Prague. The accounts have been analysed in detail by M. Suchý (2007). The edition was published by L. Toulmin-Smith (1894) and H. Prutz (1893).
6. The potential of the Kutná Hora mint accounts was demonstrated by P. Trnka (2010) in his analysis of the structure of King Vladislaus II's court before his accession to the Buda throne.
7. The history of the future King Sigismund I the Old before his reign in Poland and Lithuania is explained by S. Nowogrodzki (1937). His work remains valid even today and succeeds older studies by W. Dzięgiel (1936) and E. Breyther (1906). Not even the latest work by Z. Boras (1983) has managed to supplant it. On the other hand, the classic work by A. Pawiński (1893) is still valuable. After a gap of many years, A. Divéky (1960) resumed his publication activities

- and provides an insight into Sigismund's everyday life. Sigismund's Silesian 'engagement' was most recently analysed by P. Kozák (2008a, pp. 156–307; 2008b; 2012a). Even the author of the latest Sigismund's biography J. Besala (2012, pp. 16–48, 66–121), did not avoid picturing the 'young years' of the future king.
8. See Antanavičius & Narbutas, 2009, 2012; Antanavičius & Petrauskas, 2007.
 9. For instance, one of the extant Polish accounts of the Jagiellonian kitchen-master takes this form. See Borkowska, 2011, p. 139 note 148.
 10. Sigismund's accounting books from the period before his reign in Lithuania and in Poland in 1506 are deposited in the Crown Treasury Archives, section 'royal accounts' (*Archiwum Skarbu Koronnego, Dz. 1 Rachunki Królewskie*) in the Central Archives of Historical Records (*Archiwum Głównie Akt Dawnych*) in Warsaw, sign. 21, 29, 33.
 11. *Słownik staropolski* generally defines a „lichtyszyc' groschen type as follows: 'jednostka monetarna, grosz niemiecki, nummorum genus, grossus Germanicus'. See *Słownik staropolski*, 1963, p. 41.
 12. E. Richtrová (2011) has recently reflected different layers of meaning of the court in the Central European context.
 13. See the entry '*Item pro panno na schubki quatuor laicellis, ex quibus erant duo bykowie et alii duo minores, qui exiverant cum domino Cristofero ex Ungaria in electionem novi regis, machelskie, quamlibet ulnam XVIII gr. accipiendo, dedi XII flor.*' (Kozák, 2014, p. 146).

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Part III

Trade and Towns

9

Accounting Records of the Town Offices in Bohemia and Moravia: Methodology and Application

Pavla Slavíčková and Zdeněk Puchinger

Between the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Early Modern Period, bookkeeping in Western and Eastern Europe experienced an unprecedented development. The onset of changes was initiated by *Summa de arithmetica, geometria, proportioni et proportionalita* written by Luca Pacioli and printed in 1494, followed by a series of other theoretical books about double-entry accounting. However, initial research has shown that the conditions in the Czech lands were different. The aim of this paper is to describe the situation in Bohemia and Moravia based on the accounting records of the municipal offices from the 15th and 16th centuries, that is to say, the key principles of bookkeeping in terms of their origins as well as their subsequent development as the sources gradually evolved.¹

Towns in Bohemia and Moravia, including their administration, saw numerous changes at the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Early Modern Period (Yamey, 1967, pp. 51–75). During the Hussite wars in the first half of the 15th century, a transformation of municipal self-government began, which was connected with the multiplying political and economic activities of the towns. During the 15th and 16th centuries, Bohemian as well as Moravian towns were formed as specific legal and political self-governing units and they started to play an important role in the economic development of the state (Hoffmann, 1992). New targets and obligations meant that the municipal administrations had to deal with new requirements. Naturally, the official books produced by the city offices kept pace with the progress and began to change too. From the end of the 15th century, a growing number of municipal books, classified according to their purpose, can be observed

(Čarek-Lůžek, 1968, pp. 452–477). Still, municipal accounting books as well as the system of accounting record keeping did not change much.

In the Czech lands, the oldest preserved municipal accounting records date back to the first half of the 14th century and are from Prague. They are included in the book called *Liber vetustissimus statutorum et aliarum rerum memorabilium Veteris urbis Pragensis* and cover the period from October 1310 to February 1311 (Vojtíšek, 1930, p. 192). From this point of view, it is only a fragment, just as in the case of the fragments of the accounting records of Kutná Hora from 1375 (Leminger, 1923, pp. 3–16). It seems that both were originally discrete accounting records made for special purposes, and probably not prompted by any need for long-term and comprehensive administration. As Rostislav Nový states, in that period municipal bookkeeping was rather random, usually recorded in a book that was used for day-to-day transactions by the town council. Separate account books in Bohemian and Moravian towns first appeared in the last quarter of the 14th century (Nový, 1963); they became more common parts of municipal administration in the 15th century as continuous keeping of accounting records was required. Several account books of pre-modern municipal administration from this period can be found in the archives of Louny (1450–1472, 1490–1492), Horažďovice (1454–1464), Stříbro (1466–1471, 1497–1507), Rakovník (1474–1480), Kouřim (1484–1500), Soběslav (1484–1505), Jindřichův Hradec (1487–1535) and, last but not least, in Znojmo (a series of books from 1421 to 1469) (Volf, 1947). An extraordinary series of accounting books have survived from one of the most important towns in Bohemia of that period, Kutná Hora, which belonged to the group of royal cities and had the right to mine silver. Apart from the above-mentioned fragment of accounting records in the municipal archives of Kutná Hora, a whole number of municipal accounting books survive today. Among the oldest there are two accounting books from 1454–1455 and 1473–1474, and the others cover, save for several time gaps, the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.² In general, in the 16th century the number of accounting sources grew; besides the already mentioned towns, they can be found, for example, in České Budějovice, Český Krumlov, Náchod, Uherský Brod, Plzeň, Prague, Brno, Kaňk, Beroun, Domažlice, Pardubice, Litoměřice and some other municipal archives (Volf, 1947).

In this context, let us briefly mention some editions of sources of municipal accounting records as well as the most important secondary literature. From the point of view of Czech historiography, the first half of the 20th century may be considered the golden age of the history of accounting as several books on the topic were published. From

numerous authors, let us mention Alfréd Eisner, Bohumil Štursa, or Josef Fiala. However, all of these wrote studies on the general history of accounting and they mention developments in the Czech lands only marginally. On the other hand, the essential contribution to our knowledge of the history of accounting were the books written by Hugo Raulich (1866–1940), dealing with the development and principles of accounting systems.³ Regrettably, this promising research did not find followers in the years to come. In the 1960s and 1970s only Josef Blecha resumed research into the classification of accounting systems. However, his published conclusions are difficult to accept nowadays (Blecha, 1984, pp. 323–326). Undoubtedly, among the most significant studies in the field of municipal bookkeeping are the series of income registers of the City of Brno from 1343–1345 transcribed by Bedřich Mendel (Mendl, 1935), several studies written by Miroslav Bělohávek⁴, and later, especially the monograph by Jaroslav Vaniš (1979). All these studies are, in fact, valuable analyses of municipal accounting records complete with extensive comments, which may be considered, without doubt, the most integrated contributions to the topic of accounting records of municipal offices in Czech historiography that have been published in the Czech lands to date. The majority of the other texts on the history of accounting take the form of journal articles, among whose authors let us bring attention to Rostislav Nový (1960), Antonín Verbík (1967) or Aleš Stejskal (1999). As for the topic under examination, they predominantly focus on what the contents of the accounting records can tell us about the economic development of the town in question, and only incidentally include edited transcriptions of source material that are valuable for the current study.⁵ Three short studies may be interesting for foreign readers due to their Latin contents, which comprise a series of selected groups of economic books of the City of Brno from the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period, recently edited by Ludmila Sulitková (2001–2003). However, we argue that there are certain drawbacks to them. Firstly, there is a lack of any comment, which would clarify the book's contents to the reader, and secondly, the transcribed records are inconsistent.

It is the theoretical literature of that period that usually provides the key to an understanding of the structure of historical accounting records worldwide. However, in the Czech lands such material is neither abundant nor detailed. The only guide to the administration of municipal offices at the end of the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period available today, is a book called *Praxis cancellariae* written by Master Prokop, a scribe in the New Town of Prague (1390–1482).⁶ Besides this

book, several similar theoretical manuals date from the 16th century, which include, *inter alia*, instructions for bookkeeping. However, they were predominantly intended for the administration of noble estates. For example, there was a treatise by Jan Brtvín from Ploskovice called *Knížka tato* (*This book*) of 1540⁷, or the manual labelled *Jiná kratší správa, jednomu každému pánu velmi užitečná* (*Another short administration, useful for each gentleman*) by Mikuláš Černobýl, an alderman and scribe in Žatec, printed in 1587.⁸ Next, we can also mention Ondřej Klatovský from Dalmanshorst and his guidebook called *Nové knihy vo počtech na cifry* (*New books about numeral calculations*) published in Nuremberg in 1530⁹, and, last but not least, even if much later, *Oculus Domini* by a Jesuit priest and manager of the Jesuit college temporalities in Kostelec nad Orlicí and Liběšice, Kryštof Fischer, from 1679 or 1683.¹⁰ All those theoretical guidebooks include instructions on bookkeeping amongst other instructions to do with the organisation of either municipal or lordly offices. Their common feature is the emphasis on careful and long-term bookkeeping as only exhaustive and flawless data may give a true account of the real economic conditions of the given accounting entity (Bělohávek, 1955, p. 99).

To comply with this requirement in practice, the guidebooks recommended keeping several different books. To be specific, the scribe Prokop distinguished among four types of municipal finance books: (1). *libri rationum reddendarum*; (2). *libri hereditatum*; (3). *registra bernarum*; and (4). *libri censuum*. As for the contents, he classifies *liber rationum*, meaning the book of accounts, among *de bono honesto* books, in other words, in the honour of the town, along with the council book and *liber memorabilium*. In this sense, its priority was to preserve the records of the town's economy, while ensuring quality administration and financial control came second. Clearly, this is the reason why the books preserved to date do not contain complete overviews of all contemporaneous financial operations, to which historians often draw attention (Hoffmann, 1992, p. 225). Another unexplained question in Czech historiography is the issue of terminology relating to the municipal books of taxes and income registers. Prokop called those *ad bonum utile*, this means serving the town's profit, and clearly separated them from the accounting books. However, a number of historians, amongst others Bedřich Mendel, Václav Černý or Karel Podlesný, did not recognise this, and thus in the long-term contributed to an overall confusion in identification and research of this archive material (Verbík, 1967, p. 3).

According to scribe Prokop, only twelve aldermen were authorised to make entries into the account book. Those were made in the

chronological order of the individual transactions, first municipal incomes and then expenses.¹¹ The book was supposed to start with an entry on the appointment of the new town council, followed by the list of aldermen's names headed by the burgomaster or *primas* who assumed the office. At the same time, the list of aldermen indicated the basic structure of the book's layout: under the name of each relevant alderman and the date of the beginning of his office, there was a list of all accounting operations that occurred while he chaired the town council. At the end of the period, a sum and a comparison of the total sum of incomes and expenses were made before the following alderman assumed the post. The reliability of the records was guaranteed by an oath the aldermen took during their appointment¹².

The system for logging the accounts in the town offices recommended by the scribe Prokop, was based, in all probability, on the use practised in the New Town of Prague and actually, with only minor abnormalities, corresponds to the contents of the oldest municipal accounting books preserved to date. According to Rostislav Nový, this structure is found, for example, in the book of calculations of the city of Cheb (Eger) between 1396 and 1418, where the only difference is that at that time a written calculation (sum of incomes, sum of expenses and the balance) was not calculated for the relevant burgomaster's term of office (Nový, 1960, p. 37). Nový suggests that this is evidence of a practice that aimed to spend all received money, not to collect it in the municipal treasury (Nový, 1960, pp. 37–38). Specifically in Cheb, a statement of accounts was introduced in the second half of the 15th century, which, at the same time, led to the separation of the book of incomes from the book of expenses.¹³ This separation was unique and clearly had no analogy in other towns. A general accounting book in the sense of 'Daz ist daz obrist rechenpuch da alle rechnung der stat awns und ein schullen gen' (Nový, 1960, p. 37) has survived, for example, in Stříbro. It is in the case of two oldest accounting books of this town from 1466–1471 and 1494–1507.¹⁴ The two oldest accounting books from Kutná Hora are of a similar character and are labelled in the archives inventory as the 'Principal register of municipal incomes and expenses of 1454–1455 and 1473–1474'.¹⁵ Another specimen is the unique series of books of calculations of the town of Znojmo, among which the oldest one dates back to 1408–1409.¹⁶

It may be assumed that, already at that time, other auxiliary accounting records were kept besides the municipal accounting book. However, this habit fully developed in the 16th century, when the auxiliary accounting books were made an essential part of financial reporting in every town.

This development went hand-in-hand with an increase in the economic activities of the towns and, thus, an increased number of people who were responsible for the individual departments of municipal administration. The burgomaster and the aldermen only supervised the activities, and it was the municipal tax collectors (*Rentmeister*) that carried out the financial administration. It was a prestigious post, for which persons were selected and appointed by the municipal council. It was not unusual for the aldermen to appoint one of their own number into the post, as may be seen in Domažlice, for example. Still, any other – honourable – alderman could become a tax collector (Bělohlávek, 1956, p. 47). Furthermore, the tax collectors did not administer particular sectors of the town's economy; rather they were simply the authority that supervised the municipal treasury. The individual departments of the municipal economy were headed by clerks, to whom regular remuneration was paid for work done (Bělohlávek, 1955, p. 148). Logically, setting up a system of hierarchical structures of municipal property management, brought along a rise in the number and types of municipal accounting books. Each of the clerks in charge kept his own accounting registers, in which he recorded information on incomes and expenses for his department. Specifically in Mělník in the 16th century, vine registers, related to vine growing, were kept. There were also registers for grains, salt, iron or registers for the sale of bricks and lime produced in the municipal brickworks. However, only fragments of these survive today (Bělohlávek, 1955, p. 148). At regular intervals and based on the administered registers, each of the clerks returned the statements of accounts to the tax collector, which were later checked by the council. At the same time, the clerks handed over or received money under the powers conferred on them.

Besides these specific types of accounting books, the primate or even the individual burgomasters had their own auxiliary accounting registers. They received money when necessary from the tax collectors, plus they had an income too. In the modern sense, it was a kind of table-money or entertainment expenses as well as money for the provision of activities associated with their office; the usual expenses included remunerations for messengers and municipal servants, payments for odd jobs, expenses on prisoners as well as for various gifts and charity.

Bohdan Kaňák first identified the book of burgomasters' calculations within the group of municipal accounting books. To be specific, it was the book of burgomasters' calculations of the City of Olomouc (Kaňák, 2014, pp. 123–124). In another royal city, Mělník, a whole series of condensed notebooks labelled as burgomasters' registers have survived

from the 16th century. There was always one register for each burgomaster during his approximately four-week turn at chairing the council (Bělohlávek, 1955, p. 150). Apart from those, a mayor's register from 1616 has also been preserved in Mělník, whose structure of entries partially differs and, in its form, it resembles the city accounts *en bloc*. What can be found there are the records of the expenses for the reconstruction of the town hall and other buildings, road maintenance, as well as town entertainment and feasts. Apart from the allowances from tax collectors, the mayor's major income came from the sale of salt, in the same way as in Olomouc (Bělohlávek, 1955, p. 150). Keeping both types of registers may not have been common in practice. If they were kept concurrently but only fragments of the original series survived, it is usually difficult to identify them unambiguously without a wider context. For example, such doubts arise in the case of the accounting records from Uherský Brod of 1567 and 1569¹⁷ or the so-called 'Book of calculations of Stříbro town' of 1589–1597 and the 'Book of burgomaster's expenses' from the same town dating back to 1610–1613, which are very similar in contents, but each has a different designation.¹⁸ In all probability, however, in this case the municipal account book, that is to say the municipal tax collectors' accounts, was mistaken for the burgomasters' accounting records.

The municipal account book was used to record all the accounting operations executed by the individual clerks, by the tax collectors or by the delegated scribes. Specifically in Domažlice, but also in other towns, the book was divided into the income section and expenses section. Next, the two sections were separated according to the burgomasters' names (thus creating a source of possible confusion). The records proper were kept chronologically as the individual clerks, the primate and the burgomasters accounted to the tax collectors (Bělohlávek, 1956, p. 48). Still, this was not the main accounting book, even if it may seem to be so, as this book does not provide an anywhere near comprehensive round-up of the overall economy of any given accounting unit. Nevertheless, it may be considered a certain predecessor in a sense.

Besides the municipal accounting book and the accounting registers, other auxiliary accounting records were kept in Bohemian and Moravian towns in those days. They were especially the so-called notices, in the sense of discrete sheets, and receipts, or particular acquittances. Survival of such archival material is exceptional and our findings on this topic are thus incomplete.¹⁹ Specifically, in Znojmo, the information from registers was carried over only as a summarising entry, from notices it was written out chronologically and the information from receipts was

abridged in the municipal accounting book. In all cases, the municipal accounting book served as an engrossment (Verbík, 1967, p. 6). In return, among the services the town council offered the public was to issue, on demand, a receipt based on the data in the accounting book: *‘Písař dává-li komu jaké sumy z rozkázání páně, aneb purkrabě, ber od těch, komuž dáváš, Quitancy pro potomní paměť a takové Quitancy při počtu ukazovány býti mají.’* (*‘If a scribe gives one any sums at God’s or burgrave’s behest, take a receipt from whom you give, for the postliminary record, and such receipt should be presented during calculations.’*).

In bookkeeping during the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period in the Czech lands, calculations were understood as the statements of accounts. In Znojmo, already mentioned above, and similarly in many other towns, apart from running totals for a certain time period, most frequently a week, the accounts were usually closed once a year, namely at the end of the council’s term of office. For this purpose, all the executed accounting operations were totalled for the given sections, followed by a sum total of all incomes and expenses for the period in question, and finally, a balance between the two sums was stated. In Znojmo, the financial statement, meaning the business income, was transcribed into the book for the subsequent accounting period, but this was not a general rule in all towns. On this occasion, an ‘audit’ was carried out by an independent entity who confirmed the act of appointment of the new council. In the case of the royal cities this was a recognised municipal clerk, most frequently *subcamerarius* (Unterkämmerer, podkomoří) or *iudex curiae civitatum regalium* (hofrychtář). In Znojmo, having carried out the audit, the clerk again issued an affirmative letter to the outgoing council members, which contained a summary of the final balance (Verbík, 1967, p. 6). In České Budějovice an accounting book from 1493 to 1570 has survived, which is unique in its character as the incomes and expenses therein are divided into several basic categories and only the final sums are mentioned. It is, thus, clear that this book served only for checks and the final statement of accounts. For that reason, Miloslav Bělohlávek assumes that it may be labelled as the main accounting book in the later sense of a synthetic account (Bělohlávek, 1957, p. 33).

With a clear picture of the system of keeping accounting books in mind, it is also possible to identify the accounting system used in a municipal office in any given historical period. Even if it is not a difficult question at first sight, its exact designation is a subject of dispute among many Czech historians. In 1923 Josef Salaba spoke about the single-entry cameral accounting system already used in the case of medieval

accounting resources (Salaba, 1923). According to the current findings, he was wrong, though. The most detailed typology of the bookkeeping systems used in the Czech lands was done by Josef Blecha (1984, pp. 323–324). For the historical period under examination here, Blecha distinguished between two types of single-entry accounting systems, namely administrative accounting and merchant accounting. Besides those, was also the cameral accounting system and, last but not least, double-entry accounting; all were apparently used in the Early Modern Period in the Czech lands. In fact, we have a problem in distinguishing between the former two systems. The characteristic features of single-entry administrative accounting, also called the old cameral system, are, in Blecha's own words, regular entries, separate records of incomes and expenses in the rubric book or in various continuous records, from where these were carried over to the main book at certain intervals; sometimes incomes also included receivables, and expenses included payables. On the contrary, the second discussed system of single-entry accounting, namely single-entry merchant accounting in Blecha's terminology, appeared in the Czech lands, according to Blecha, by the 15th or 16th centuries; and its principle lies in keeping several separate accounting books: (1) a register of assets (estate and debts), which is made at the beginning of business activity and at the end of each year; (2) a daily book of cash desk and a purchase and sales journal; (3) various auxiliary books; and finally (4) a balance account (ledger) or book of debts, which is a record of receivables and payables according to persons. This book was at the same time used as the main book in this accounting system.

However, a classification based on identical materials and presented by Renáta Hótová differs from Blecha's categorisation. She describes three different systems: (1) an accounting system based on a number of accounts, the so-called single-breasted system, which was, according to Hótová, formed in the thirteenth century; (2) an accounting system based on two basic lines of accounts, the double-breasted system; and (3) a cameral system, which is a system based on keeping day-books, based on which monthly checks and annual systematic accounts were drawn up, later labelled as the main books. Nevertheless, Hótová claims that this system was specific to the management of revenue and expenditure, meaning state or budgetary organizations (Hótová, 2003, pp. 66–67).

Yet, we run up against problems at the very beginning if we are to decide, based on the above typologies, which of these accounting systems corresponds to the record administration in the accounting sources from Bohemian and Moravian towns back in the 15th and 16th centuries. Firstly, as for Josef Blecha, in his case the classification

criteria, in all probability, were not the contents or the system of keeping records, but rather the person who used it. This means the single-entry accounting merchant system was used especially by merchants, while single-entry administrative accounting was used by the management of aristocratic estates, for example. However, he may have been misled, for instance, when he claims that the 'single-entry merchant accounting is partially double-entry' (Blecha, 1984, pp. 323–324). Last but not least, he does not consider the factor of time. He uses the same description for different accounting systems, the same expressions for records from the Middle Ages and, for instance, the 18th century. Secondly, the classification suggested by Hótová appears similarly faulty, for example in the case of property records. Due to this, it is not possible to quantify the economic result. In addition, the exclusive inter-connection she makes between the cameral system and budgetary organizations is partially wrong. As seen, for example, in Eduard Mikušek's research, based on Ferdinand Lobkowicz's letters, he proves the use of the cameral accounting system (in this case the Puteani version) by the management of Lobkowicz estate at least from 1823 (Mikušek, 1981, pp. 76–77).

In conclusion, there is no doubt that all the accounting records considered herein contain entries kept in the single-entry accounting style, which had retained, despite its theoretical options, a number of specific and often archaic elements, which reduce their value as a historical source. First, even if the books clearly distinguish between the expenses and incomes, the incomes also include contingent claims, and similarly the column of expenses includes debts. For that reason, we should actually refer to these as the column of revenue and the column of costs. Unfortunately, due to this arrangement of records, we will never find out the exact economic position of the town, that is the profit or loss of the municipal government economy, or we will never know the value of property, or its net worth. The typical feature of all the accounting records is a positive balance between the recorded incomes and expenses. In fact, though, when clearing the debts, the majority of the municipal economies were negative – the debts exceeded the assets the city had available. In all probability, one of the oldest attempts at separate registration of debts and, thus, specification of the final balance of the municipal economy may be found in the municipal accounting book of Znojmo. At its start, apart from the already-mentioned transcription of the balance of the books from the previous period, there was also the list of debts. These were, moreover, classified into old and new, which was, undoubtedly, significant progress

in perfecting the system in use towards its better conclusive evidence (Verbík, 1967, p. 4). Theoretically, if we had had, on the one hand, the initial value, from the register of property containing the values of items and, on the other hand, a list of debts, meaning that a book of claims had been kept as one of the auxiliary ledgers (in fact, very often a register of claims), it should be possible to figure out the net worth by deducting the general value of claims from the value of property. In this case, the described system would have been able to plan as well as to quantify the result of economic activity. In other words, the benefits of this system would have been very close to the double-entry accounting system and all its advantages. In fact, there was still a long way to go to achieve such an elaborate type of single-entry accounting in Bohemian and Moravian towns. In all likelihood, though, Luca Pacioli's *Summa de arithmetica*, together with other works of his followers, did not influence bookkeeping in the Czech lands at the start of the Early Modern Period. Instead of having adopted a more elaborated system of double-entry accounting from abroad, Bohemian and Moravian towns drew on their own experience, maintained their habits and developed and perfected their domestic traditions.

Notes

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2. National District Archives in Kutná Hora, Collection of Municipal Archives of Kutná Hora, files nos. 455–607.
3. Hugo Raulich, *Kamerální účetnictví* [Cameral accounting], Prague 1935. Other texts by the same author: *Teorie účetnictví* [The theory of accounting], Prague 1938; *Technika účetnictví* [The technique of accounting], Prague 1938; *Tajné účetnictví* [Secret accounting], Prague 1938.
4. Miroslav Bělohávek, *Kniha počtů města Plzně 1524–1525, Příspěvek k hospodářství českých měst, Plzeň 1957*. Other texts by the same author: *Mělnické městské hospodářství před Bílou horou: Několik pohledů do finanční a hospodářské správy města*, In: *Časopis Společnosti přátel starožitností*, vol. 63, 1955, pp. 147–168; *Hospodářství města Domažlic v první polovině XVI. století*, In: *Časopis Společnosti přátel starožitností*, vol. 64, 1956, pp. 46–56.
5. Petros Cironis, *Účty města Rokycany v letech 1599–1600*, In: *Minulostí Rokycanska*, vol. 7, 1997, pp. 3–26; Jiří Slavík, *Neznámý zlomek městského počtu z Kostelce nad Orlicí*, In: *Dissertationes historicae: Ad honorem Jaroslav Šůla*, vol. 6, 1998, pp. 215–224.
6. František Mareš (ed.) *Prokopa Písaře Nového Města pražského Praxis cancellariae*, Prague 1908.

7. Jan Brtvín z Ploskovic, Knížka tato dvě stránky v sobě drží: v přední stránce jest o způsobu a životu křesťanském, kterak by člověk sám sebe, při tom i jiné, vésti měl, zvláště pak kteří v světě nad jinéma panují; v druhé stránce o pořádku slušně z strany hospodářství kratičce shledáno, Prague 1540. Regional Museum in Olomouc, no. 4192.
8. Mikuláš Černobýl, Jiná kratší správa, jednomu každému pánu velmi užitečná, kterak statek svůj i úředníky své řídit, spravovati a k nim dohlédati má; též také úředník, počnouc od hejtmana, kterýž k úředníkům dohlédá, purkrabě, podpurkrabě, písař, kuchmistr, klíčník, šafář a tak všelijací úředníci, kteříž co na práci a v moci své mají, kterak se jeden každý při svém úřadě zachovati má, a jak k takovým menším úředníkům i k lidem po panství a k sirotkům vyšší z povinnosti dohlídati mají, Prague 1587. Regional Museum in Olomouc, no. 4192.
9. Ondřej Klatovský z Dalmanshorstu, Nové knihy vo počtech na cifry, Norimberk 1530. The Library of the National Museum in Prague, sign. 28 G 5.
10. Kryštof Fischer, Oculus Domini. Operis Oeconomici per R. P. Christophum Fisher S. J. conscripti pars prima de oeconomia suburbana etc. 1679. Oculus oeconomii. Pars secunda Oeconomiae suburbanae posthuma 1683. Prague 1731, Strahov Monastery in Prague, sign. IB VII 35.
11. František Mareš (ed.) Prokopa Písaře Nového Města pražského Praxis cancellariae, Prague 1908.
12. František Mareš (ed.) Prokopa Písaře Nového Města pražského Praxis cancellariae, Prague 1908.
13. Rostislav Nový refers to a book from 1444–1496, sign. C 2426–2477 and from 1443–1450, sign. C 2145–2151, today National District Archives in Cheb, Collection of Municipal Archives of Cheb.
14. National District Archives in Tachov, Collection of Municipal Archives of Stříbro, Kniha počtů 1466–1471, sign. 22; Kniha počtů 1494–1507, sign. 23.
15. National District Archives in Kutná Hora, Collection of Municipal Archives of Kutná Hora, Hlavní rejstřík obecních příjmů a vydání, 1454–1455, no. 545; 1473–1474, no. 546.
16. National District Archives in Znojmo, Collection of Municipal Archives of Znojmo, Kniha počtů 1408–09, sign. II 238; 1421–22, sign. II 240; 1426–27, sign. II 241; 1427–28, sign. II 243; 1441–42, sign. II 243/2; 1442–43, sign. 242/2; 1453–54, sign. II 247/1; 1457–58, sign. II 242a; 1466–68, sign. 244; 1468–69, sign. 246. See A. Verbík, Znojemské knihy počtů, pp. 3–15.
17. National District Archives in Uherské Hradiště, Collection of Municipal Archives of Uherský Brod, Repertorium na městské příjmy a vydání 1567, sign. 75; Repertorium na městské příjmy a vydání 1569, sign. 76.
18. National District Archives in Tachov, Collection of Municipal Archives of Stříbro, Kniha počtů 1589–1597, sign. 29; Kniha vydání purkmistra 1610–1613, sign. 30.
19. Literally a mountain of various accounting records from the Early Modern Period has survived, for example, in the Archives of Stříbro. In all probability, they were originally parts of accounting books, from which they were removed by historians, and, thus, their informative value was partially destroyed. National District Archives in Tachov, Collection of Municipal Archives of Stříbro, No. 36, sign. GI 2013.

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10

Remnants and Traces: In Search of Wrocław's Accounting Books (Late 14th to Early 16th Centuries)

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The paper concerns the issue of the accounting books produced in the city of Wrocław (Breslau) in the late Middle Ages and at the outset of the Early Modern Period. During most of this period, Wrocław belonged to the Kingdom of Bohemia and, until 1437, was part of the Holy Roman Empire (Maleczyński and Hołubowicz, 1960, pp. 552–559). In the years 1469–1490 Wrocław was subordinated to the Hungarian king, Matthias Corvinus for his lifetime, and then returned to the Kingdom of Bohemia (Goliński, 2001, p. 197; Orzechowski, 2005, pp. 85–86; Kubinyi, 2008, pp. 87, 97, 101–102).

The city was located at the crossroads of many trade routes between Flanders and Red Ruthenia on the one hand, and the Baltic zone and the cities of the southern German-speaking countries and northern Italy on the other (Wendt, 1916, pp. 41–42, 53, 55–56, 58, 108–109, 111, 113)¹. Between the 1380s and 1474, Wrocław was a member of the Hanseatic League (Wendt, 1916, p. 8; Kehn, 1982, p. 102; Myśliwski, 2012). Wrocław's merchants maintained numerous economic contacts of varying duration and intensity, with cities in the aforementioned circle.

During this period, Wrocław's population grew to 20,000 inhabitants (Maleczyński, 1958, p. 194). Long-distance trade was not solely the preserve of the merchant elite, but also of shopkeepers and innkeepers, and individuals outside these circles. This field of business was dominated by Germans, although a role was also played by the Jewish community, established in the city no later than the 12th century (Bobowski, 1987, p. 5). In the first half of the 15th century, the important person in Wrocław was a newcomer from Florence, Antonio Ricci – a papal collector, leaseholder of salt mines in Little Poland (*Małopolska*), energetic trader

in goods from Eastern Europe and Northern Italy – who had companies in Wrocław and Rome (Ptaśnik, 1959, pp. 36–38, 74, 76–77, 79–82, 84, 134, 137, 146–151)². Wrocław also hosted a large influx of merchants from the Upper German area, the State of the Teutonic Order, and the Kingdom of Poland (Kutrzeba, 1902, pp. 72–87).³

As a result, Wrocław was a highly developed city with a thriving trade, influenced by various commercial cultures – Upper German, Jewish, Hanseatic, Flemish, and Italian (Myśliwski, 2009a, pp. 93–231). Commercial development continued with no crucial interruptions until the beginning of the 1440s, and probably remained at roughly that level until the end of the 1450s (Myśliwski, 2009a, pp. 501–502). This was followed by a period of regression and crisis owing to several factors: a war with the King of Bohemia, George of Poděbrady, the development of competing market centres (Leipzig, towns in Greater Poland) and the consequent shifting of trade routes as well as defeat in the customs war with the Kingdom of Poland at the turn of the 16th century.⁴ Despite these setbacks, the late medieval period was a time of prosperity in Wrocław's long-distance trade. Against this backdrop, the state of preservation of accounting sources from that period up to the beginning of the 16th century is a surprise. No complete or original private accounting ledgers have survived from this period, only a small number of extracts.

The oldest text contains commercial records from 1412–1426.⁵ It was written by Paul Beringer, who began as a factor but later became a shareholder in the company of Michael Banke, one of the largest merchants in 15th-century Wrocław.⁶ Beringer's original records belonged to the *Roppanum*. This archival collection partly disappeared or was destroyed during World War II. However, a copy, made in the 18th century by Samuel Beniamin Klose, an archivist and model of Wrocław historiography (Harc, 2002), has been preserved. At the same time, Klose provided information about the debt of Banke's wife, Katharina, to Beringer, which the latter had entered in his book of accounts (*in suo libello*).⁷ Beringer started his book with notes in Latin about his entry into Banke's service in 1412. However, most of his records relate to trade trips to Venice, which he either made himself or by employing an intermediary from Salzburg. Individual records concerned trade with Prague prior to the Hussite revolution, and commercial contacts at annual fairs in Brzeg in Silesia. Beringer noted the sums of money he carried to the Adriatic to buy exotic goods, frequently vaguely defined as *gut*.⁸ Note should be taken of two entries of 1419 that are very detailed.⁹ In these, Beringer recorded precisely not just how much money he received and

from whom, but he also made a detailed list of goods and the sums spent on individual products – pepper, saffron, ginger, cloves, peacock ginger (*czuwar–Zitwer*), wool, *Bukeschin*¹⁰, brocade, cloth, and satin. He also provided a summary, giving in the first entry the amount of money that he had received to make his purchases (2,428 ducats) and in the second the amount that he had spent (2,612 ducats). This difference could have resulted either from his own money being spent on these exotic commodities or credit taken up in Venice. All Beringer's entries were primarily written in German, although Latin, too, was used. Occasionally, one sentence was written partly in Latin and partly in German (*Item emi ingwer um bargeld librae 321*).¹¹

The second merchant's ledger from Wrocław has also not survived intact to the present day. A three-page excerpt from this ledger dated 1438 is extant, however, because in 1440 it was entered in the city book, which still survives today.¹² This was done at the request of the owners of the company – another leading wholesaler, Hans Hesse (Wendt, 1916, p. 57; Pfeiffer, 1929, pp. 297–298), and his two partners – Karl Kunze, Hesse's brother-in-law, and Jürgen Zebrecht. This fragment was published by Otto Stobbe (1867). Unfortunately this valuable publication contains errors (Myśliwski, 2009a, pp. 36, 194, 204, 275, 280, 412, 481, 492) and requires re-editing. The copy from the company ledger, written by Hesse in first person, contains a detailed list of the commercial and financial activities that the company conducted in the Kingdom of Hungary. The merchants sold fur and cloth there worth over 3,100 marks¹³ and purchased copper and pepper, which they later sold to individual buyers in towns in Upper Hungary (Levoča, today Slovakia), and Silesia (Wrocław, Nysa).¹⁴ The record thus contains the weight of goods and the amount spent on them, and sometimes also the price per unit weight of a particular commodity. Also noted were the expenses incurred in the course of business. The records further include a list of debtors to the company.¹⁵ Some of them were obligated to provide the Wrocław merchant with cloth of a certain value, while others were to pay off their debts in cash. At the same time, the partners provided calculations of the value of individual series of transactions, comprising the total value of the imported fur and cloth plus the value of customs duty. The procedure was identical for the copper and pepper purchased.

Formal evaluation of the original accounts is difficult, because they only survive in extracts found in other types of sources. Besides, the accounts and notes kept throughout the dozen or so years by Beringer differ fundamentally from the extracted account resulting from one business trip by Hesse and his partners. In their varied content, they

resemble many accounting books that were kept during the Hanseatic area in the 14th and 15th centuries (Lesnikov, 1958, p. 135). The inclusion of calculations of profit and loss may be interpreted as a feature of single-entry bookkeeping.

The *terminus ad quem* of the period under study is the Popplau family's ledger of 1502–1516, who ranked among the chief merchant families in Wrocław at that time. Their ledger disappeared during World War II. No copy has survived, but fortunately the original manuscript was described in detail and exploited by Ludwig Petry (Petry, 1935, pp. 4–26). The layout of this source was also eclectic. The accounting book was divided into shareholders' accounts (including a subaccount called *Pauperes*) and contractors of the company. This was supplemented by a list of cash expenditures at fairs in Wrocław (Petry, 1935, pp. 7–8, 18–19). The first two accounts were structured on a debit/credit basis. However, some records were entered into the ledger purely on a chronological basis. A separate section of the ledger contained about 150 letters.

This residual legacy of the accounting practices in an important city in European trade is surprising. It is difficult to believe that the meagre remains of commercial accounting known today accurately represent its state in the late medieval and early modern periods. Many of Wrocław's merchants must have been taught to read and write, as at the end of the 13th century, there were two parish schools in the city that they certainly attended, and c. 1515 there were between five and seven schools (Maleczyńska and Heck, 1961, p. 406). One must also remember the contacts that Wrocław enjoyed with Bruges (Małowist, 1931, pp. 1020–1021), northern Italy (Ammann, 1927, p. 53; Bastian, 1931, p. 5; Mysłowski, 2009b, pp. 101–102), and the chief Hanseatic cities such as Cologne and Lübeck (Aubin, 1961, p. 450; Goliński, 1991, pp. 43, 53–54) dating back to the second half of the 13th century, as well as with Nuremberg in the 14th century (von Stromer, 1974–1975, pp. 1081–1082) – all centres with much more developed trading cultures. It is known that in the long run these contacts influenced the development of Wrocław's own trade and craft culture (Mysłowski, 2009a, pp. 122–125, 136–145, 152–161, 170–171, 189–196). Therefore, they should have also contributed to the development of operating accounts no later than the 14th century.

Unequivocal evidence is provided by direct references to other ledgers in the city books called *Libri excessuum et signaturarum*. These were city books which primarily contained information on citizens' contracts and offences (Laband, 1862: 5, 7–12, 14).¹⁶ The oldest surviving book dates from 1385, and from 1389 there is an almost complete set – 62

volumes – up to 1495 (except for the period of 1480–1489). However, it is only as late as the second half of the 15th century that as few as four mentions of accounting ledgers appear (*Rechenunge, Rechenbuch, buch, die geselschafft bucher Register*).¹⁷ It might seem that references to papers with financial and trading information should also be treated as copies of accounts (*houptczedil, Czedil*).¹⁸ However, *Zettel*, that is a sheet of paper, could cover a wide range of information: not only a list of receivables¹⁹ or a compromise agreement about paying off debt²⁰; but also a list of merchandise transactions,²¹ or information on the distribution of merchandise amongst partners.²² Only the first of these may be taken into consideration as a possible copy of a fragment of an accounting book. Perhaps three further references to registers (*Register, schulderregister*) may be interpreted as reflections of accounts as well.²³ However, it is possible that they were only lists of debtors and debentures.

Indirect evidence for the existence of further accounts is provided by other entries from the *Libri excessuum et signaturarum* which contained clearings and settlements between traders concluded before the city council. The reference here is to records for which there is no information provided in other written sources of information. The scope of the settlements from the *Libri excessum* was varied – from simple statements on the conclusion of a settlement, through settlements with specified amounts, to detailed accounts with many parties. Evidence of the operation of still other accounts is provided by those entries which contain settlements with several partners, contractors, debtors, or creditors. There are a total of only three such entries after 1447 inclusive.²⁴ A fourth may be added here which concerned the aforementioned Hans Hesse (1456),²⁵ but it is already known that he kept a ledger.

Another source which should be taken into account in the search for indirect evidence of the operation of accounts is testaments. In Polish historiography this type of source has been used for the reconstruction of townspeople's estates and the capital market (in Gdańsk/Danzig, for example, Samsonowicz, 1960, pp. 92–103). No one has researched the Wrocław wills in their entirety. Only about thirty wills and testamentary entries are known to have been preserved from the period between 1362 and the end of the 15th century. This is a small number compared to Gdańsk (Możejko, 2010, p. 150), not to mention Lübeck or Prague (Cordes, 1998, p. 178; Jíšová, 2007, p. 295). The majority of Wrocław's wills are of no interest in terms of research on commercial accounting as they only contain bequests of money, domestic equipment, clothes and jewellery, either to church institutions or members of the family. Just five wills contain settlements with partners that may have been copied

from accounts.²⁶ The oldest such testament, made by a shopkeeper, dates from as late as 1450. Some other wills simply mention ledgers.

It is worth asking the question here as to whether accounts were not kept earlier by Wrocław's Jews. It is known that, after the massacre of their community in 1349, the governor of the King of Bohemia demanded from the perpetrators the return of Jewish goods *cum debitis et literis inventis Iudeorum*.²⁷ Did this only refer to debentures, whose return was also demanded by the Tyrolean ruler? Or does this term perhaps include vaguely defined accounts? Or perhaps we should accept the general premise that it was difficult to operate regular credit activities without written evidence of receivables. However, for Jewish creditors simple lists of debentures or the debentures themselves could have sufficed.

Without ruling out the likelihood of the origin of Wrocław's private accountancy in the 14th century, we must recognise Paul Beringer's accounts from the beginning of the 15th century as the earliest definite example. On the basis of extant sources, it must be assumed that in Wrocław account ledgers were kept by only a few people. This minimal number is surprising considering the trading and financial contacts that the inhabitants of the city had. The low number may be partially explained by two sets of circumstances. Firstly, there is the considerable destruction of Wrocław's collections during World War II (Kucner, 1952, p. 215; Stelmach, 2002, pp. 205–206). The second reason would be the merchants' disinclination to reveal information about their accounts or anything more extensive than fragments of their content. The content of the ledgers were, after all, commercially sensitive.²⁸ At the same time, before the city council the traders only had to record single transactions, contracts, and agreements. Hypothetically, even such entries could provide evidence of account ledgers. Furthermore, it is worth noting that account ledgers were kept not just by members of the merchant elite like Hesse or Popplau, or wholesale factors like Beringer, or Hans Hartenberg, about whom little is known except that he had high material status.²⁹ On the other hand, another merchant, Niclas Ritter, whose company did keep an accounts ledger, was not numbered among Wrocław's plutocracy. This demonstrates that less wealthy merchants outside the Wrocław business elite also kept account books in the second half of the 15th century.

It is therefore probable that in 15th century Wrocław there were more company account ledgers being kept than is evident from the preserved sources. However, nothing can be ascertained about their number.

The question thus arises of what systems were being applied by Wrocław's bookkeepers? As set out above, all three of the best-known

accounting books by Beringer, Hesse & Kunze & Zebrecht, and Popplau, were eclectic in form. In the two older ones, the single-entry bookkeeping system was applied. As regards the 16th century accounting book kept by Popplau's family the biggest part of it was based on a credit/debit structure. Does it provide evidence for the reception of the double-entry bookkeeping system? The answer to this is not easy. Petry did not classify the extant source into this type. He stressed that it did not include a final balance, which should have been carried out in a 'special secret book' (Petry, 1935, p. 19). He was almost convinced that this book had existed ('in all likelihood'). Hence, one may draw a conclusion that the extant manuscript could have functioned as a journal/daybook, which included important information to be transferred to the general ledger. Consequently, the extant accounting book seems to include an indirect trace of double-entry bookkeeping (debit/credit structure), but it was not an example of double-entry bookkeeping in itself.

Another source reference to the hierarchical group of accounting books (*die hauptczedil und andre registra*)³⁰ should be also taken into consideration as indirect evidence of a double-entry bookkeeping system. It is possible that this quotation refers not only to a group of accounting books operated by one partnership, but also stresses that one of them was the main one. These books could have been a general ledger and other auxiliary books, such as journal/daybook and notebook, as depicted in the classical description of double-entry bookkeeping by Benedetto Cotruglio (Lopez and Raymond, 1955, pp. 375–376). The quoted reference concerned the partnership of Albrecht Scheurlein, a leading merchant and citizen of Wrocław (died in 1462). Other circumstantial evidence that strengthens this hypothesis is Scheurlein's origin. He came to Wrocław from Nuremberg, first as a factor of an Upper German partnership, before deciding to start his own business in Wrocław and to settle there for the rest of his life (von Stromer, 1963, pp. 32, 55, 63, 65, 84). As double-entry bookkeeping had been used in Nuremberg since 1425 (books by Marquard Mendel; von Stromer, 1971b, p. 94) it is possible that Scheurlein would have been familiar with this system.

Thus, treating Beringer's records as the oldest definite example of ledger accounts, it may be stated that, in Wrocław, private accounts appeared at very nearly the same time as in Kraków or Gdańsk: Heinrich Smet of Kraków kept records from 1401–1402 (Pawiński, 1872, pp. 63–67, 69–70; Kutrzeba, 1902, pp. 158–159) and Johann Pyre of Gdańsk from 1421 (Orłowska, 2012, p. 32). However, in the Empire accounts were kept by merchants considerably earlier: from the end of the 13th century onwards within the Hanseatic area (Dollinger, 1966, p. 217; Cordes:

1998, pp. 205–235) and from 1304 onwards in the Upper German cities (von Stromer, 1971a, p. 53; Bastian, 1944, pp. 309–323). To this may be added the three surviving extracts from ledgers originated in Prague and in an unascertained south-Bohemian town between 1379 and the end of the 14th century (Graus, 1956, pp. 645, 648, 649).

Such indisputable data leads to the conclusion that private accountancy developed later in Wrocław than in Prague and the main trading centres in the Empire. Alternatively, if Dollinger's opinion that double-entry bookkeeping emerged within the Hanseatic area as late as the 16th century (Dollinger, 1966, p. 218) is correct, then one may suppose that individual merchants of Wrocław (Scheurlein and possibly Popplau) could have started to practise this modern kind of bookkeeping a little bit earlier.

Notes

1. See also Weymann (1938, pp. 113–116); Nowakowa (1951, pp. 54–69, 78–87, 96–99); Bruns and Weczerka (1967, pp. 467–470, 539–548, 550–552, 568–570, 681–690); Kopiński (2004, pp. 64–73); Mysłowski (2009a, pp. 75–92).
2. See also Wendt (1916, pp. 48–50, 60); Saporì (1967, pp. 156, 159).
3. See Kutrzeba (1902, pp. 72–87); Scholz-Babisch (1930); von Stromer (1974–1975); Kopiński (2004); Mysłowski (2010).
4. Rauprich (1892, p. 26); Rauprich (1893); Petry (1935, pp. 113, 117); Koczy (1936, p. 19); Heck (1978, pp. 72–73).
5. State Archive in Wrocław – Archiwum Państwowe we Wrocławiu (hereinafter: APWr.), *Zbiór Kłosego*, vol. 48, f. 19v–22r [henceforth: Beringer].
6. For the commercial activities of Paul Beringer see Wendt (1916, pp. 45–46), von Stromer (1974–1975, p. 1091), Mysłowski (2009a, pp. 168–169, 170–171, 227–228, 251). Despite the high standing and eminent role played in the Wrocław long-distance trade by Michael Banke, his life has not been described in detail so far. The basic data can be found in: Wendt (1916, pp. 45–46), Pfeiffer (1929, pp. 162–163, 166–167), Hoffmann (1975, p. 185).
7. Beringer, f. 21r.
8. Beringer, f. 20r, 20v.
9. Beringer, f. 21r–21v.
10. It was linen textile of Mediterranean production (Cyprus, Syria, Egypt), the high quality of which made it similar to silk (Heyd, 1879, p. 692).
11. Beringer, f. 21r.
12. APWr., *Libri excessuum et signaturarum*, vol. 33, f. 126–128 [henceforth: Hesse & Kunze & Zebrecht].
13. Hesse & Kunze & Zebrecht, f. 126.
14. Hesse & Kunze & Zebrecht, f. 127.
15. Hesse & Kunze & Zebrecht, f. 128.
16. See also Kucner (1952, p. 213); Goerlitz (1962, pp. 126–127); von Stromer (1974–1975, pp. 1083, 1086, 1091, 1094); Mysłowski (2009a, pp. 41–47).

17. APWr., *Lib.exc.sign.*, vol. 44, p. 199 (1464); vol. 45, p. 154 (1465); vol. 54, p. 69 (1476); vol. 61, p. 179 (1494).
18. Hesse & Kunze & Zebrecht, f. 128 (*czediln*); APWr., *Lib.exc.sign.*, vol. 44, p. 199 (1464 – *die hauptczedil und andre registra*); vol. 45, p. 230 (1466 – *eyne Czedil*); vol. 53, p. 37 (1475 – *eyne czedil*); vol. 58, p. 43 (1490, *eyner czedil*).
19. APWr., *Lib.exc.sign.*, vol. 45, p. 230 (1466).
20. APWr., *Lib.exc.sign.*, vol. 58, p. 43 (1490).
21. APWr., *Lib.exc.sign.*, vol. 53, p. 37 (1475).
22. Hesse & Kunze & Zebrecht, f. 128.
23. See respectively: APWr., *Lib.exc.sign.*, vol. 45, p. 206 (1465); vol. 52, p. 73 (1474); Ebel, F., Carls, W., Schelling, R. (eds.) (2000), *Der Rechte Weg* (henceforth: RW), vol. 1, p. 502 (no. 49, 1479); vol. 2, p. 871 (no. 56, 1486).
24. APWr., *Lib.exc.sign.*, vol. 36, p. 211 (1447); vol. 53, pp. 37–38 (1475); vol. 58, pp. 106–107 (1491). For the first of these references see Petry, 1935, p. 106.
25. APWr., *Lib.exc.sign.*, vol. 41 (1456), pp. 72–5. Despite the reference to *czedil* as a source of information, such a long and detailed list of the imported wares should have been registered in an accounting book due to the importance of all of these transactions.
26. APWr., *Lib.exc.sign.*, vol. 38, pp. 106–107 (1450); vol. 44, pp. 199–200 (1464); vol. 54, p. 60 (1476); vol. 50, p. 105 (1472); vol. 59, pp. 163–165 (1491).
27. Korn, G. (ed.) (1870), p. 170.
28. (...) *wir soldin unser gesellschaft heymlickeyt, register und schultbriefe vor sie legin* (...) (RW, vol. 1, p. 484, no. 32, 1466).
29. APWr., *Lib.exc.sign.*, vol. 45, p. 154 (1465). The only what we know about this burgher is that he purchased a precious, silver-gilt vase (*komp*) in Buda for 200 Hungarian florins (Myśliwski, 2009a: 278). It follows that he must have been a long-distance merchant of middle rank, who never held any urban office in Wrocław.
30. APWr., *Lib.exc.sign.*, vol. 44, p. 199 (1464).

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11

Financial Obligations of the City of Gdańsk to King Casimir IV Jagiellon and His Successors in the Light of the 1468–1516 Ledger Book

Beata Możejko

In 1468, a new account book was opened at Gdańsk's city chancery to keep a record of payments made in connection with the financial obligations imposed on the city by Casimir IV Jagiellon, the King of Poland (1447–1492). These obligations took the form of rent, which, in accordance with a royal privilege of June 1454, Gdańsk (Danzig) was to pay to the king and his successors, in recognition of the monarch's authority and sovereignty. The rent was set at 2,000 Hungarian florins, to be paid in two equal instalments – 1,000 florins on the Feast of St John the Baptist (24 June) and 1,000 florins on Christmas Day (25 December). Gdańsk was awarded two further privileges in 1455, when the king granted the city the right to draft its own set of laws and the right to levy taxes, and later, during the visit made by Casimir IV in May 1457, yet more privileges were bestowed on the city (on 15 and 25 May), uniting the Old, Main and New Towns, as well as the Osiek district, under a single council, and affording the city a wide range of commercial rights and freedoms regarding maritime policy. Casimir ennobled the Gdańsk coat-of-arms (two silver crosses set against a red background) by introducing a gold crown above the two crosses (Simson, 1913; Biskup, 1952, pp. 67–132; Możejko, 2004, pp. 16–21; Możejko, 2008, pp. 17–18). These privileges came about as a consequence of the king's decision to incorporate Prussia, including Gdańsk, into Poland in March 1454, which in turn led to the Polish-Teutonic conflict known as the Thirteen Years' War (1454–1466) (Biskup, 1967). Gdańsk's financial contribution to the war, estimated at 469,896 Hungarian florins (Samsonowicz, 1982, p. 47),

resulted in the city not having to pay the agreed rent until 1468. In August of that same year, the king paid a visit to Gdańsk and declared that he considered the rent of 30,000 florins owed him for the past 15 years to have been paid in view of the costs which the city had incurred during the war. Starting with the December 1468 instalment, Gdańsk began to pay the king 2,000 Hungarian florins per year and continued to do so right up until the Partitions of Poland in the late 18th century. A chit acknowledging receipt of this sum, signed by King Stanisław August Poniatowski, survives in the Gdańsk State Archive (*Archiwum Państwowe w Gdańsku* – hereinafter APG – 300/12, no. 869; Możejko, 2004, p. 24).

On what basis Gdańsk's obligations were calculated is unknown. In keeping with the Teutonic privilege granted in 1342 to the Main Town (also known as the Chartered Town, as it was established by a charter based on Chełmno [Kulm] Law) by Grand Master Ludolf König, and renewed by Grand Master Winrich von Kniprode in July 1378 (Simson, 1913, no. 97, pp. 56–57, see Zdrenka, 1998, p. 219), in return for all of the freedoms it had received the city was to pay the Teutonic Order 170 grzywnas (1 grzywna or mark is equal to half a pound) on the Feast of St Martin (11th November). The city was entitled to the lands and rents due from the merchant's hall, the bread stalls, meat stalls, shoe-makers' stalls, market booths and the baths; in exchange, the Teutonic Knights levied an annual fee, also of 170 grzywnas, payable on St John's Day (24 June). Thus, the Main Town paid a sum of 340 grzywnas in total; plus the Order also took two-thirds of court fees.¹ In 1377, the Teutonic Knights agreed to the appointment of an Old Town Council. The Council's powers were fairly limited, partly because the guilds were fiscally subordinate to the Teutonic Commander. The Order, regarding itself as owner of the plots within the Old Town, charged rent on each one, and also levied charges on shambles and stalls (Biskup, 1985, p. 360; Powierski, 1997, pp. 204–205). For this, the Old Town paid the Teutonic Order 350 grzywnas and 20.5 skojece (skojec or scotus is equal to 1/24 of a grzywna) (*Das grosse Zinsbuch*, p. 120).

In January 1380 Winrich von Kniprode granted Klaus Lange and Sandowin the right to establish another town in Gdańsk based on Chełmno Law, known as the New Town. One-third of court revenues were apportioned to the locator that planned such settlements, two-thirds being apportioned to the Order, which held jurisdiction over roads up to the city gates and over individuals visiting the city, any resultant court revenues being divided in identical fashion. The New Town paid the Teutonic Order a total of 125 grzywnas (Simson, 1913, no. 101; Biskup, 1985, p. 437; Powierski, 1997, p. 212). Thus, the sum

of liabilities owed to the Order by these three urban units amounted to 815 grzywnas and 20.5 skojece. According to M. Goliński (2000, p. 28; see also Możejko, 2004, pp. 31–35), the Gdańsk rent was compensation for a property tax of 1250 Polish grzywnas, averaging 30 Polish groschen per florin (hence 2,000 florins $\times$ 30 groschen = 60,000 : 48 groschen per grzywna = 1250).²

We do not know what Gdańsk's annual income was at this time, as the earliest accounting books that can be consulted date from the first half of the 16th century. M. Foltz has calculated that in 1530 the city's income amounted to 26,010 grzywnas (Foltz, 1912, p. 493, fig. 42). Nonetheless, research indicates that Gdańsk regularly met its rent obligations to King Casimir IV and his successors. Gdańsk was not the only city in Royal Prussia that paid the king this type of tax, another example being the smaller city of Elbląg (Elbing), which paid a mere 400 florins. A third major Prussian city – Toruń (Thorn) – did not pay any rent, probably because it served as a regular venue for assemblies of the monarch with the nobility and burghers. By hosting the king and his retinue, Toruń was already incurring considerable costs (Możejko, 2004).

Disbursements were made from the Gdańsk rent according to a strictly defined procedure (Możejko, 2014), which contributed to the development of accounting in the city (simple bookkeeping, recording debits and credits). The king – in practice the royal chancery – issued a given recipient with a payment order known as a quittance (Latin *quitancio*). Orders of this sort, written on parchment and stamped with the royal seal, stipulated the beneficiary's personal details and the sum awarded, as well as indicating from which instalment of which year the payment was to be made. Recipients often signalled the impending arrival of these documents by sending a separate notification letter informing the city council of Gdańsk about the amount payable and which instalment it was to be disbursed from. The payment orders and notification letters were sent by envoys or delivered in person on the occasion of a visit to Gdańsk.

The city council of Gdańsk appointed two treasurers (who were also councillors) known as chamberlains (Polish *kamalarze*, German *Kämmerer*), to disburse payments from the Gdańsk rent. These treasurers were responsible not only for registering the orders in a dedicated ledger, but also for ensuring that they did not exceed the grand total of 2,000 florins that the city had agreed to pay. The latter of these tasks became particularly crucial in the mid-1470s, when the royal chancery began to issue payment orders to be settled not only from directly forthcoming instalments of the Gdańsk rent, but also from those due in future years.

This prompted a race of sorts among beneficiaries to reach Gdańsk and register their orders. Attempts were also made to gain early payment on those orders payable from future instalments; however, these efforts were met with considerable resistance from Gdańsk. Payments were disbursed at the city treasury (*kamlaria*) (APG, 300/12, no. 487 l. 27 and 33), the money being handed over either directly to the beneficiary or to an individual appointed by the said beneficiary.

As mentioned earlier, from the moment that Gdańsk first began to pay this rent, an accounting book was opened, both to register incoming payment orders and to record their disbursement. At this point, it is valuable to focus a little more closely on this ledger as an interesting example of simple bookkeeping. It has to be noted that very few of the Gdańsk medieval accounting books are extant to this day. The earliest in this series is a book of receipts and payments for the years 1379–1382; the city treasury's 15th-century books survive only in vestigial form (Grulkowski, 2005, pp. 123–164).

The register, which survives in the form of an accounting book, is a narrow folio, leather-bound volume with fragments of the twine that held together individual leaves visible on the spine. At the top of the cover is a now very faded inscription: *Regist(e)rn super quitanciis regnis pro solu qem sutin n f/*, followed by remnant traces of further text. Two pieces of paper, which were probably added in the 19th century, feature on the book's spine. The first of these reads: *Regestrum super quitanciis regiis 1468–1476 1476–1516*, the years 1468–1476 being written in a different coloured ink, suggesting that they were added at a later date. The second piece of paper, affixed lower down the spine, is a badly damaged printed label featuring the words *Stadt Danzig* and an old German catalogue number: 300 Abt 12 Nr 487 (the last two numbers being written in ink).

The ledger consists of 232 pages, in essence divided into two principal gatherings. The first consists of 12 leaves measuring 35cm in length and 12.2cm in width. The second consists of 96 leaves, 32cm long and 10.8cm wide, divided into four gatherings of the same format.³

An assessment of the first 12 leaves, their dimensions and the manner in which records were entered on them, suggests that initially this gathering was an independent entity that was only later combined with the remaining sections. The opening passage of the first gathering begins with a statement declaring that herein are recorded the king's dealings with the Council concerning the annual payment of 2,000 florins to the monarch, beginning with 1,000 florins on Christmas Day, as decided at a meeting with the monarch held in Malbork (Marienburg) in 1468. The

first leaves feature information either solely about the payment order and what sum it was for, or include additional information about its disbursement (*betalt*), sometimes stating the date of payment. The first entries are for the year 1468; they record who the beneficiary of the payment order was, the sum of money disbursed and the date of payment. However, for the year 1469, only details of the recipient and the sum of the payment order are recorded, with no note being made of disbursement. In 1470–1472 essentially all of the aforementioned information is noted (APG, 300/12, no. 487, l. 3–4: 1468–1471). Records for the years 1468–1472 are repeated on the following leaves, essentially confirming the hypothesis that the earlier entries represent a rough draft. By 1474 a record was being kept of who had collected the money and delivered it to the recipient: *Item betalet dem hrn bischoppe van culmenzee by her Roloff Velisteden Lxxviii gulden* (APG, 300/12, no. 487, l. 8). Entries made in the following years, 1476 and 1477, record only who the intended recipients (beneficiaries) were and the value of each payment order (APG, 300/12, no. 487, l. 10–11). The next dozen or so leaves of the ledger are blank (APG, 300/12, no. 487, l. 12–24–blank). It seems that at this point, namely in 1475, or possibly even a year earlier, payment orders (or reservations) were registered two or even three years in advance, hence those that were to be settled from instalments due in 1476–1477. This was the city chamberlains' response to the actions of the royal chancery, which had started to issue payment orders to be disbursed from future instalments.

Maintaining the ledger in this manner, the entries for each year usually took up a single leaf, though occasionally two years were recorded on one leaf. The transcription of successive sections from the first gathering and the changes in the recording system are probably attributable to the fact that during the first years of processing payment orders, the Gdańsk chancery was still devising or learning a method for recording disbursements. On the other hand, these entries were determined by instructions emanating from the royal chancery, for whom dealing with the Gdańsk rent was also a novelty.

The subsequent, smaller format, leaves of the cited source (APG, 300/12, no. 487, part II) open with a passage explaining the aim of keeping the ledger: 'here one can read (find out) about the persons who obtained royal payment orders to the Council and the dates of their disbursement. This part begins with the repetition of entries (details added or amended) regarding instalments for the years 1476–1477. These entries were transcribed no later than the summer of 1476.

The second part features a new way of bookkeeping. In contrast to the earlier practice, two pages were now dedicated to each instalment,

details of the beneficiary and the sum of the payment order awarded to them by the king being noted on the left-hand page (verso), with the facing, right-hand page (recto) being used to record the date of payment, including details of who actually delivered the money, and sometimes also who authorised the disbursement of the given sum. Entries on this second page were often amended, reflecting the passage of time between the receipt of the payment order, its registration and its settlement. For example, a payment order recorded as the first entry on a verso page would not necessarily have been the first to be disbursed; it may equally well have been paid out second, third, etc. In other words, the order of entries on the verso page did not guarantee that payments were made in this sequence, and could subsequently be mirrored on the recto page. This situation was dealt with by leaving room on the recto page to record information about disbursement, parallel to the entry registering the payment order on the verso page. Sometimes, however, not enough space was left or the neighbouring entry took up more room. In these cases, entries on neighbouring leaves were connected by lines, sometimes a note recording the disbursement of a given payment order was overwritten at the top of the leaf, insertion marks being added. Using this sort of duplicate recording system, where a note of how much and to whom the city owed payment was made on one leaf, and how much was paid out and to whom was noted on a second leaf, allows the cautious suggestion that this may have been double-entry bookkeeping.⁴ This type of bookkeeping was used in mercantile accounting, where the guiding principle was that whatever was entered on the credit side of the ledger also had to be recorded on the debit side, and vice versa. However, it is also feasible that the cited recording system was simply a variant of single entry 'charge-discharge' accounting except that, rather than organised vertically (i.e. charges above and discharges below) it is arranged horizontally.

In 1482, the royal chancery introduced the practice of reserving a sum of 500 florins from each instalment for the king, and dividing the remainder into smaller sums for which the chancery continued to issue payment orders. From the June instalment of 1482 up until 1492 (and later still), records begin with an entry for the king, followed by all remaining entries. The June instalment of 1483 features the only instance of entries for the sums paid out being recorded in Arabic numerals; hitherto and thereafter sums are given in Roman numerals. In the case of the entries under discussion, payment order values, stated in florins, were noted in Roman numerals, whilst disbursements were recorded together with their converted value in grzywnas, and the amounts were written

down in Arabic numerals (APG, 300/12, no. 487, i.e. up to l. 64–65). In 1482 the earlier system of extended registration was reinstated, which also entailed making a note of when payments were to be disbursed.

The ledger was essentially maintained in two languages: pages where payment orders were registered being written in Latin, whilst those where disbursements were noted were in German. The first sets of entries were probably made in Latin because this was the language in which the royal chancery formulated payment orders. Despite the fact that the scribe or scribes (several hands are evident) had no previous experience of paying monies by instalment, it has to be said that they kept the accounts with great diligence, summarising each year, and if so much as a single florin was left, carrying it over to the next year.

Subsequent gatherings encompass the years 1493–1516, hence the reign of Casimir IV's sons – John I Albert and Alexander I Jagiellon, as well as part of the reign of Sigismund I the Old.⁵ The previously established principles of recording were adhered to, with slight adaptations to accommodate changes introduced by the royal chancery. In 1516, King Sigismund decided that the entire sum of 2,000 florins would be paid to the treasury for the use of the state (Możejko, 2004, pp. 355–358) and the Gdańsk ledger was discontinued, with only receipts acknowledging payment of the rent being collected.

When it came to registering, tracking, organising and monitoring records (how much had already been spent and how much was left) at the royal chancery, things did not look too good. Although official documents were already being recorded at that time in the Crown Register (*Metryka Koronna*), those relating to treasury matters were not as yet clearly distinguished from the rest (Rutkowska, 2005, pp. 10–15). It was not until the 1480s that efforts were made at the royal chancery to organise documents, creating a separate category for payment orders issued to various individuals from royal revenues, such as taxes from other royal cities, income from salt mines and rents from Gdańsk and Elbląg. Such an attempt to structure records was undertaken by the royal Vice-chancellor Andrzej Oporowski. Consequently, in 1482–1483 a register of payment orders was kept at the royal chancery (Rutkowska, 2005, introduction and pp. 128–155) Chancellor Krzesław Kurozwecki also endeavoured to structure and record payment orders, resulting in a register being kept for the years 1484–1488 (Pawiński, 1897a). The next known attempt at organising the recording of payment orders was not made until 1491, under Vice-chancellor Grzegorz of Lubraniec. This register proved to be short-lived, with only several-dozen payment orders being recorded in it (Możejko, 2004, p. 73). It was not until Jan

Łaski was appointed to the chancery, initially as secretary and later as royal chancellor, that steps were taken to put the royal finances in order. The first of these took the form of a treasury accounts book that was referred to as Book no. 35 and published by Antoni Pawiński (1897b). The Book begins in May 1502 and ends in early August 1506; hence it covers almost the entire reign of King Alexander I Jagiellon.

The next attempt to bring order to the royal finances and the management of state expenditure and revenue is represented by a book of accounts in the form of a register recording payment orders, including those concerning Gdańsk, dating from the early reign of Sigismund I the Old (1507–1515). The register was kept on the orders of Jan Łaski and later continued by Maciej Drzewiecki (Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych Warszawa, Archiwum Skarbu Koronnego, Division I, no. 38).

Established in 1454 and paid regularly from 1468, the Gdańsk rent constituted a source of income for the Polish state. It seems that the sum of 2,000 Hungarian florins was not a burden on Gdańsk's finances; however, it doubtless provided an important contribution to the royal budget. In the city itself, the emergence of a new financial obligation forced the Council to devise a new procedural method for receiving and registering the payment orders. Started in 1468, the ledger allows us to trace the steps involved in processing the Gdańsk rent, and to compare the information therein with notification letters held at the Gdańsk Archive, as well as with treasury-related source documents from the Polish royal chancery. The ledger discussed in this article also provides an example of simple bookkeeping with divisions into debit and credit accounts, and represents the first known accounting book of its type in Gdańsk.

Notes

1. For more on the payment of 340 grzywnas see Foltz (1912, p. 22); Simson (1913, no. 97, pp. 56–57); *Das grosse Zinsbuch*, p. 120. See also Biskup (1985, pp. 437–438); Powierski (1997, p. 183) (in the first instance of the St Martin's Day rent it is erroneously recorded as 70 grzywnas, whereas source materials clearly make mention of 170 grzywnas); Czaja (1999, p. 43, note 174).
2. It is also possible that the Gdańsk rent was a combination of the 340 grzywnas paid to the Teutonic Knights by the Main Town and the income (or some part of it) obtained from villages that had previously belonged to the Gdańsk commandry and partly to the Marienburg commandry and were acquired by Gdańsk thanks to a privilege granted in 1454 by King Casimir IV.
3. The first gathering covers the years 1476–1489 and starts on page 25, pp. 25–88, 16 folios; pp. 56–57 are blank with visible folds; p. 55 is blank with a very clearly visible watermark depicting a bull's head with an additional long horn

- in the middle of its head and a cross). The second gathering covers the years 1487 (June instalment) to 1501, pp. 89–138, 12 folios; between pages 114 and 115 pieces of paper inserted to protect the stitching are visible. The third gathering covers the years 1501–1515, pp. 139–194, 14 folios; pp. 166–167 features a scrap of paper protecting the binding; p. 199 visible watermark depicting a sleeved hand; traces of stitching on pp. 212–213.
4. This definition of double-entry bookkeeping is found in *Z historii rachunkowości*, 1959, p. 8, pp. 11–12. It is believed that the first treatise on double-entry accounting, known as the Italian method, was presented in the latter half of the 15th century by the Italian mathematician, Franciscan friar, and doctor of theology and philosophy Luca Pacioli in his work *Summa di arithmetica, geometria, proportioni et proportionalita*, published in German translation with an extensive introduction by Penndorf, 1933. For more on late medieval double-entry accounting see Penndorf, 1913, p. 177 ff. It should, however, be noted that the topic of double-entry accounting had already been addressed by Benedict Cotruglio, an Italian merchant from Dubrovnik, in his book on the art of commerce (I have used the Polish translation by Piotr Wróbel and Jacek Bonark, Kraków 2007). On the subject of accounting manuals in Gdańsk, albeit dating from the 16th century, see Wojciechowski, 1956/57; more recently, Gierusz, 1999, pp. 49–64; on the subject of Gdańsk manuals and methods of teaching bookkeeping in the 16th century see Kubik, 1959, pp. 7–79; Kubik, 1963.
 5. APG, 300/12, no. 487. Folios 106–139 cover June 1493 – June 1501; the December entry for 1502 records that this was the first instalment for Alexander I, whose reign lasted until 1506, (ff. 141–161); thereafter it concerns payment orders issued by Sigismund I up to 1516.

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12

Old Interpretations and New Approaches: The 1457–1458 Thirtieth Customs Register of Bratislava

Balázs Nagy

There has been a long-lasting scholarly debate on the role of Hungary in the commercial system of mid-15th century Central Europe, and certain new arguments and scholarly contributions over the last century have affected our understanding of this question. The discussion was initiated in 1902 with the publication of a book by Ferenc Kováts (1873–1956) on the circulation of commercial goods in western Hungary in the 15th century (Kováts, 1902). Kováts based his reconstruction on the registers of the ‘thirtieth customs’ (*tricesima*) of Bratislava (Pressburg, Pozsony), the thirtieth customs being a duty of one thirtieth the value of trade goods, paid mainly after they were exported from or imported into the country.¹

The thirtieth customs (*tricesima*) provided a significant part of the royal incomes during the 14th and 15th centuries. The origin of collecting the duty goes back to the early 13th century. The first reference to the collection of the thirtieth customs dates from 1208, when Andrew II gave exemption from payment of the duty on the wine and foodstuffs coming from the lands of the Benedictine abbey of Lébény (Weisz, 2011, p. 267). There are a couple of other references during the reign of Andrew II (1205–1235) to the levying of the thirtieth customs at other toll stations as well (Weisz, 2013, pp. 267–268). At this early stage, the duty was basically paid on the traffic of inland trade and was a special income of the queens of Hungary. The toll stations were located in various places within the country, including towns in the central regions of Hungary. So, the toll stations were not situated only at the border zone (Weisz, 2013, p. 16).

But already from the second half of the 13th century, the thirtieth customs were levied on foreign merchants as well, so the duty served as a source of income to the treasury from foreign trade. In 1289 the Archbishop of Esztergom (Gran) raised the issue of the merchants coming from Regensburg and Vienna, who bypassed the custom place of Esztergom and so avoided paying the duties to the archbishop. From the mid-14th century onwards the thirtieth customs were paid on exported goods as well (Weisz, 2011, p. 271).

The main commercial roads obviously offered convenient locations for custom places. Thus customs stations were mostly established close to busy trade routes, for example at Esztergom, Győr, Buda, Trnava and Zagreb. The main overland route towards Vienna and other western destinations runs close to the line of the Danube, so the custom places on that route were of special importance. The Győr thirtieth customs station was transferred to Pressburg between 1365 and 1369, thus creating one of the most important custom places (Pach, 1999, pp. 231–277).

From 1440 Pressburg had the right of, and responsibility for, collecting the thirtieth customs due in that town. But if the merchants used the route on the right bank of the river Danube they could bypass the Pressburg thirtieth customs office, thus causing severe financial loss to the town. The intention of Pressburg was, of course, to maximise its income and make the payment of the customs as difficult as possible to avoid. Therefore from 1450 Pressburg paid the king for the right to collect the customs income of Rusovce (Hungarian: Oroszvár, German: Karlbürg, Rossenburg, Kerchenburg) on the right bank of the Danube as well (Kováts, 1922, pp. 104–143). Thus it might be supposed that the customs registers of Pressburg give an authentic image of the commercial activity directed towards the rest from that time onwards. In fact only one accounting book has survived, covering the year between April 1457 and April 1458. Matthias Corvinus was elected as King of Hungary in January 1458, so this source gives a basis on which to reconstruct the foreign trade of the country at the very beginning of Matthias' reign.

The Pressburg custom register records both the outgoing and incoming traffic between April 1457 and April 1458. The amount of the custom due was one thirtieth of the value of the commercial goods, so the custom had to be calculated and paid on the basis of the value of a transaction. The custom register lists the date of the given transaction, the name of the person who handled the goods, usually mentioning from where he/she came, a precise description of the goods, with its quantity, the amount of the customs due and the actual amount paid.

Since the number of the registered transactions is high, reaching 4,849, it is possible to use the data for comparative analysis.

The first point to make is that the proportion of the transactions, and thus the direction of trade, is highly unbalanced, 84 per cent of the cases represent incoming traffic and only 16 per cent outgoing traffic (Kováts, 1902, p. 48).

This account book reveals a very striking imbalance in foreign trade. Kováts calculated the total value of the goods imported at 166,564 florins and the total value of exports at only 19,784 florins. Imports of the commercial goods made up 90 per cent of the traffic by value and exports only 10 per cent (See Table 12.1) (Kováts, 1902, pp. 139, 196).

The structure of the commercial exchange is also unbalanced. Imports were heavily dominated by industrial products, mainly different types of textiles and metal products, as the following tables show. (See Table 12.2)

Since the customs register refers to the origin of the goods, the distribution of the individual items can be established and the variety of the selection is also noticeable. The Pressburg register distinguishes at least 58 types of cloth of different origin and different price category. According to this source, cloth arrived in Hungary from Lombardy, England, the Low Countries, the Rhineland, southern Germany, Bohemia and Moravia (Kováts, 1902, pp. 106–111).

Table 12.1 Balance of foreign trade

	Hungarian florins	%
Importation	166,564	89.4
Exportation	19,784	10.6
Total:	186,348	100

Table 12.2 Distribution of imported goods (%)

Primary products	Spices	2.6
	Other primary products	1.4
Industrial products	Quality cloth	59.9
	Linen products	6.4
	Other textile products	4.6
	Clothes, dresses, hats	7.9
	Metal products	12.7
	Others	4.5
	Total	100

Source: Kováts, 1902, pp. 119, 139.

Thus textile products made up 79 per cent and industrial products altogether more than 90% of the total imports, the proportion of all other types of merchandise being almost insignificant. The composition of the exports likewise reveals a skewed distribution. (See Table 12.3)

These statistics prove that exports were comprised almost exclusively of agricultural and primary products, predominantly live animals and animal products. These goods found their markets in the south German towns, in Silesia and in Northern Italy. Nuremberg, Wrocław and Venice were within the radius of 500 to 700 kilometers from the central region of medieval Hungary, so live cattle could be driven there. This prosperous commercial exchange was based on the increasing demand for meat in those regions and the intensifying of cattle breeding in central Hungary. Some of the larger towns (Buda, Pest, Székesfehérvár, Szeged) secured a dominant position in the cattle export trade (Blanchard, 1986, pp. 427–460; Kubinyi, 1971, pp. 342–433; Kubinyi, 2009, I. pp. 361–405). The rearing of the heavy Hungarian grey cattle was also a feature of that period.

There was one other major change in the system of the thirtieth customs in the second half of the 15th century. The ratio of this duty was raised from 1/30 to 1/20, that is to say from 3.3 per cent to 5 per cent of the value of the goods. Therefore there are references in the sources which describe it not as *tricesima* but as *vigesima* (Pach, 1990a pp. 81–82; Pach, 1990b, pp. 257–276; Pakucs-Willcocks, 2007, pp. 17–20).

The data in the Pressburg registers present the most detailed statistical data for the mid-15th century foreign trade of Hungary, and the calculations of Kováts are still widely accepted in scholarly literature. A question remains, however: do these customs registers accurately reflect the overall structure of the country's foreign trade at the period?

Table 12.3 Distribution of exported goods (%)

Cattle	21.0
Sheep	20.8
Horses	12.3
Other animals	0.5
Animal products	6.4
Wine	23.3
Fish	10.8
Industrial and mining products	4.4
Other primary products	0.5
	100

Source: Kováts, 1902, pp. 196–197.

The analysis of the 1457/58 customs registers and the assessment of their significance initiated a long debate in 20th-century Hungarian historiography.

In his first monograph published in 1955, Jenő Szűcs (1928–1988) argued that the negative balance of trade during the period was a major cause of the decline in urban development in late medieval Hungary. Szűcs based his conclusions especially on his studies of the history of Sopron and Pressburg in the second half of the 15th century. According to him, the substantial outflow of precious metals, particularly gold, from the country attracted the attention of foreign merchants who conveyed industrial goods to Hungary. The consequent competition from imported western industrial products suppressed the emerging handicraft industries in the towns of western Hungary (Szűcs, 1955, p. 182).

Oszkár Paulinyi (1899–1982), a leading expert in mining history, in his influential and often cited article published in 1972, characterized the economic situation of late medieval Hungary under the rubric: rich land, poor country (Paulinyi, 1972, pp. 561–602; Paulinyi, 2005, pp. 183–227). According to Paulinyi the state of affairs reflected in the 1457/58 customs registers had very severe consequences. On the one hand, it led to the gradual decline of local manufacture in the urban centres of Hungary, and on the other it caused the outflow of the production of the gold and silver mines of Hungary from the country. Paulinyi also argued that the commercial connections of Hungary were dominated not by local but by foreign merchants, and so the profits of commerce were exported and did not remain in the country (Paulinyi, 1972, pp. 597–598).

However, since very few 15th-century customs registers survive that may shed light on the commercial balance of late medieval Hungary, later comparative sources should be taken into account as well.

Győző Ember (1909–1993), published an analysis of his own research on other, later thirtieth customs registers, beginning in 1542. On the basis of this he challenged the traditionally accepted interpretation. Ember argued that one cannot reconstruct the real structure of the mid-15th century foreign trade solely on the basis of one surviving set of customs registers. Pressburg was certainly one of the most important customs posts where commercial goods were recorded. But the traffic at the Buda and Székesfehérvár customs office also needs to be taken into account – had it been the case that the corresponding records survived. Certainly part of the commercial goods that arrived from the western direction or left the country via the same route were charged customs

there. Ember also noted that, according to the mid-16th century customs registers, in fact only about 10 per cent of the western exports at that time went through the customs at Pressburg, while the overwhelming majority of the traffic was registered at the nearby customs offices at the north-western border of the country. Thus, on the basis of the evidence from the later registers, Ember assumes that the proportion of exports was most likely higher in the mid-15th century than indicated by the Pressburg registers but, since the records of the other custom places at this earlier period have been lost, we do not have enough documentary evidence to give a full and accurate picture of contemporary commercial activity.

The registers of the western thirtieth customs offices in 1542 also show a quite different state of the trade balance in comparison to the 1457–1458 records. In the mid-16th century, imports made up only about 30 per cent of the traffic and exports almost 70 per cent. Thus exports were strongly in the majority and imports played a less significant role. This data shows a quite different situation concerning the trade balance, which also weakens the argument for a high deficit of imports over exports in the mid-16th century. It is hardly credible that, in the space of a century, the proportion of exports within the foreign trade in its entirety increased from 10 per cent to 70 per cent (Ember, 1961, pp. 1–46; Ember, 1983, p. 15).

The cattle trade has a special significance from the point of view of foreign trade. Cattle went through the customs procedure at special places, so it was not always registered in the same way and at the same place as other goods, and also its share in trade as a whole is striking (Ember, 1971, pp. 86–104). In 1542, the cattle trade made up almost 60 per cent of the whole traffic and 93 per cent of the exports (27,529 heads of cattle) (Ember, 1988, pp. 82, 95–100). In that year the majority of the cattle trade going towards the west was registered not at the Pressburg toll station, but at nearby customs places like Senec (Hungarian: Szenc/Szempc, German: Wartberg) or Trnava (Hungarian: Nagyszombat, German: Tirnau). So this could be an explanation for the uneven character of the 1457/58 customs register as well, if, that in that year, the exportation of cattle was likewise significantly higher than the figures in the registers suggest, and thus the balance of trade more balanced. A recent study by Zsolt Simon enlightens some aspects of the trade towards the south by analysing the traffic of the trading posts of Kulpin (Hungarian: Kölpény) and Barics (close to Progar, west of Belgrade) (Simon, 2006, pp. 815–882). Mária Pakucs in her book published in 2007 examined the oriental trade of Sibiu (Hungarian: Szeben, German: Hermannstadt).

This town in southern Transylvania controlled a significant part of the foreign trade towards the south-east (Pakucs-Willcocks, 2007).

Elemér Mályusz (1898–1989), in his studies published in the 1980s, argued that the intensity of cattle exports was higher than earlier supposed and, therefore, that the outflow of precious metals was less significant than previously thought (Mályusz, 1983, pp. 319–326; Mályusz, 1985, pp. 21–35, Mályusz, 1986, pp. 1–33).

In the last decades, András Kubinyi (1929–2007) published a number of studies devoted to the economic history of medieval Hungary, in which he also discussed in detail the problem of the 15th-century balance of foreign trade (Kubinyi, 1992, pp. 165–174, Kubinyi, 1998, pp. 109–117). Kubinyi challenged the picture of an overly serious negative balance of the mid-15th century foreign trade and argued for the revision of former perspectives. According to his analysis, the export of the cattle was higher than other historians calculated.

Kubinyi also insisted that large-scale cattle breeding had a positive side effect on the regions where the cattle came from. The prosperity of many late-medieval market towns (*oppida*) was a consequence of the increase in cattle breeding and the cattle trade. Towns like Szeged and Pest made a good profit out of cattle and on a smaller scale from horse breeding and trading.

Besides these factors, mining, especially the mining of precious metals, had a positive effect as well by increasing Hungarian exports. This activity generated financial prosperity and led to a significant concentration of purchasing power in the mining regions and mining towns. Imports were usually at the expense of the outflow of the money minted from precious metals. Thus, in the course of the dynamic progress in trade relations, these regions attracted long-distance trade and also made the local merchants economically stronger (Nagy, 1999, pp. 347–356).

Thus one may suppose that the return to equilibrium of the foreign trade balance had already started in the mid-15th century. The commercial capital available in the south German merchant towns had the most significant impact on the development of the Hungarian economy. According to Kubinyi it was only the local textile industries, and not urban industries and handicrafts in general, which were negatively affected by the inflow of foreign industrial products.

Despite all the debates and scholarly discussions about the value and reliability of the Pressburg thirtieth customs register, some basic characteristics about the late medieval economy of Hungary might be established on that basis of this source. Imports were dominated by industrial products, mainly cloth/metal products and spices, and the main

export articles included live animals, agricultural products and metals, including copper and precious metals. Thus the character of the foreign trade was similar to its later profile. The overall amount and value of the foreign trade were not outstanding, but Hungary in the period of Matthias Corvinus was closely connected to the international economic system in various ways and by different forms of commercial contacts (Kubinyi, 2009, I. pp. 370–377).

Notes

A revised, updated and extended version of an earlier paper (Nagy 2009, pp. 13–20). For the form of place names I follow the convention set out in the preface of Pál Engel's book (Engel 2001, pp. xi–xii).

1. For the history of the thirtieth customs see Domanovszky (1916), Domanovszky (1979, pp. 51–99), Pach (1990a), Pach (1990b, pp. 257–276), Pach (1998, pp. 33–41), Pach (1999, pp. 231–277), Simon (2006, pp. 815–882), Pakucs-Willcocks (2007, pp. 16–20).

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Part IV

Church and Money

13

Financing a Legation: Papal Legates and Money in the Later Middle Ages

Antonín Kalous

From the 11th and 12th centuries onwards, the organisation of the Church was administered, apart from the local bishoprics and archbishoprics, more and more by the papal curia and the central offices that developed in the period. The system of these institutions is described in the historiography and the offices are more or less clearly defined. The most important of these would be, of course, the Apostolic Chamber, papal chancery, papal chapel and later (from the 13th century) the Apostolic Penitentiary and the *audientia causarum*. All these offices were active and could execute their authority thanks to the papal plenitude of power and its delegation (Barraclough, 1968, pp. 93–101; Schimmelpfennig, 1992, pp. 134–141, 159–166; Cushing, 2005, pp. 81–85; Robinson, 2004, pp. 368–460). The papal legates are usually described as one of the elements that supported the spreading of papal power along with the College of Cardinals, councils or canon law (Cushing, 2005, pp. 83–85; Robinson, 1990, p. 146); they were special envoys of the pope with extraordinary and exceptional powers given to them by the same authority of the pope. Even if they are usually not described as an integral part of the system of papal government, because they are not a stable, but rather an *ad hoc* part of it, as an office they might be regarded as such a part (Robinson, 1990, pp. 146–178). The papal legates were, naturally, not present in Rome but were itinerant. Their activities, therefore, had a number of specific problems of, for example, residence; temporal or geographical limitations of their power; legatine (and thus papal) ritual and ceremony; relation to secular powers; and, very importantly, the problem of financing their legation, travels and activities outside the central papal chamber and central revenues of the papacy.

Who would pay for the legation? Where would the money come from? How much money would be needed? This chapter tries to answer such questions, which naturally appear when studying the representation of papal power in the countries outside Rome and Italy. The system of the papal legation was changing throughout the medieval centuries, even if the formal standing was supposed to be the same, complying with the *decreta* and the *decretalia* of the canon law of the 12th and 13th centuries. The organisation was following changes in society, the political claims of the papacy as well as the needs of the Church. These changes naturally also included adjustments in financing (Maleczek, 2003, pp. 46–54; Kalous, 2010, pp. 119–124).

13.1 Procuration

A complicated argumentation with a simple result was used to secure the financial support for the legates. One of the duties of a bishop or an archbishop was the duty to visit his diocese or province for the reasons of teaching and correction. In the same way a landlord and his representatives were entitled to get food and lodging from the church and nobility, the bishop was entitled to acquire the same from the church institutions within the area of his authority, that is the *procuratio canonica*. Consequently, the pope asked the bishops and archbishops to do the same for his legates. And finally, the papal legates, as direct representatives of the pope, who was the judge ordinary to all (in all the dioceses) according to the decretal of Alexander III *Cum non ignoretis*, X 1.30.1 (Friedberg, 1881, II, col. 183; Pennington, 1983) and thus authorised to collect *procuratio canonica*, were also entitled to benefit from the same privilege in the individual dioceses, namely those of their legatine provinces, as it was included in the decretal law of *liber extra* (X 2.26.11; X 3.39.17) (Friedberg, 1881, II, cols 385, pp. 627–628; Ruess, 1912, pp. 187–188; Figueira, 1980, pp. 332–348, 409–415; Robinson, 1990, pp. 162, 266–267).

Dispatching legates, the pope needed the support of the local church, namely the archbishops. The Patriarch of Aquileia swore to Pope Gregory VII as early as 1079 that he would support the ‘Roman legate’ with all his necessities.¹ By the end of the 12th century this was one of the typical parts of the oath of the archbishop when accepting the *pallium*, as Hubert Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury, did in 1193 to Celestine III (Tangl, 1894, no. XVIII; Robinson, 2004, p. 406). Later, such an oath would also be taken by the bishops and abbots, who promised not only to help, but also to secure safe conduct and not to permit any injustice

to the 'legates or nuncios' (Tangl, 1894, no. XIX). The province and the individual lands were to nurture the legate in his travels for the whole period of his stay.

The procurations were secured by the popes for the legates as their first stable and systematised income and as such they were used until the later Middle Ages. A brief overview of the payments is given by Werner Maleczek (2003, pp. 46–49) and it is clear that the procurations were typical mostly before the 15th century (cf. Ruess, 1912, pp. 187–204). The procurations may have secured for the legate quite a substantial income, as the case of Gentile da Montefiore, a legate in Hungary (1307–1311) shows (Maleczek, 2003, p. 46; Pór, 1885, pp. 416–472). Also the cases from the Kingdom of Bohemia of the second half of the 13th to the late 14th centuries indicate that the financial burden of the support of the legate hard-pressed the province (Krofta, 1908, pp. 425–434; Szczur, 2008, pp. 231–233). The payments by the province to the legate were often subject to criticism, even if the level of support for the individuals was limited by the Third and the Fourth Lateran Councils (the legates should be moderate in their retinues; X 3.39.6 and 23) (Friedberg, 1881, II, cols 623, p. 632). Pope Benedict XII further limited the support that could be drawn from the procurations and asserted the need for moderation (Extrav. comm. 3.10.un.) (Friedberg, 1881, II, cols 1280–1284). The procurations, as stated above, started to disappear as a support for the legates in their provinces during the later part of the 14th century connected to the troubled times of the schism.

13.2 Central payments

Already, in the 14th century, in connection to the Avignon phase of the papacy and most importantly the Great Schism, the system must have been adjusted to the new financial situation of the Church and of the papacy itself. New payments from the centre were offered to the legates during their legatine duties. In the beginning of the 14th century, during the pontificate of John XXII, instances can be found of special financial support of the nuncios by the papacy, and later the central payments of the legates or nuncios can be substantiated with documentary evidence (Baumgarten, 1898, nos 8 and 10). However, the 14th century might be understood as a transitional phase in the legatine system and the system of their financing. Cardinal legates were members of the cardinals college and thus able to participate in the income of the college. It is, though, in the beginning of the 14th century that this income started to be reserved only for the cardinals who stayed at the curia. This

practice is confirmed by the constitution of Clement V of 1312, which expressly states that all the cardinals are entitled to participate in the income of the college (that is the cardinals' share in the common and the petty services, *servicia communia* and *servicia minuta*) excluding those who at the time held legatine office (Baumgarten, 1898, no. 3).

The income from the legatine province was thus even more crucial to sustaining the legate. Or was it? Relatively soon, the constitution of 1312 was circumvented for various reasons. In the 14th century there was a growing number of cardinals sent from the curia as nuncios, who participated in the income of the college, but had no right to the resources of the local church (Kyer, 1979, pp. 28–31; Kyer, 1978, pp. 475–477). The reasons for an increased number of nuncios may be linked either to the intentionally less dominant position of the nuncios in negotiations for peace between England and France, and thus better suited to arriving at a compromise agreement (as Kyer suggests), or the simple fact that the pope himself was present in France and thus his envoys in France could not hold the highest authority (similarly the legates in the papal states never had the highest authority when the pope dwelled in Rome).

Even if the general rule that the legates do not have a share of the college's income was valid throughout the 14th and 15th centuries (Dykmans, 1981, p. 500; Dykmans, 1980, p. 158), there was another way around this restriction. Especially, after the end of the schism and final victory of the popes over the conciliarists, it became typical to issue exemptions for the cardinals. These were the simple papal concession of the right to participate in the revenues of the College of Cardinals, a special exemption from the rule, which could take various forms. Thus, for example, Cardinal Jean Le Jeune went as legate to Milan in 1447 and participated, in the same year Cardinal Juan Carvajal left as legate *de latere* to Germany and participated in the income of the college for six months. Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa served as a legate to Germany in 1451 and participated in the income for the whole year (Eubel, 1914, pp. 29–30). Cardinals Marco Barbo in 1472–1474, Giovanni d'Aragona and Ausias Despuig in 1479, for example, were conceded the right to participate in the revenues for the whole duration of their legation (Eubel, 1914, pp. 38, 42). The situation was, however, not always so clear. It was explicitly stated in the consistorial diary in October 1451 that five cardinals who were not present at the curia should not participate in the income. One of them was Cardinal Guillaume d'Estouteville who was created legate *de latere* in August. Later, however, it was agreed by cardinals representing the College, that Cardinal Guillaume should participate in the revenues for one year after his departure on 16th September

1451, but he had not had any share in the income of the cardinals' chamber from the churches of Salzburg, Canterbury, York, Lichfield and Carlisle. Instead, he was entitled to receive 1,000 gold florins of the Chamber, which were assigned to him from the income of the church of Poitiers. No further participation was allowed; the cardinal only started to participate in the revenues again after his return in January 1453 (Eubel, 1914, pp. 30–31; Bourgin, 1904, p. 289). The situation was even more complicated when the cardinals were absent without a legatine commission. For example, see the case of Cardinal Giovanni d'Aragona and his stays in Naples in 1482 (Eubel, 1914, pp. 44–46). In any case, many legates were able to gain some extra income from the College of Cardinals, even when absent from Rome.

At the same time, further income may have been secured from the original benefices of the legate, who might also be awarded a faculty to extract money from his benefice, where he was not present, because of his stay in the legatine province.² A special situation in terms of benefices was happening in Hungary, where the king held the patronage right over the Hungarian church. During the reign of Matthias Corvinus and his followers, a few legates became even bishops in the country and could have utilized the resources of the individual benefices.³ This is, however, a specific circumstance which cannot be regarded as a regular income of the legates. The revenues of the benefices and of the cardinals' chamber were not part of the central income of the *Camera Apostolica*. The remaining possibilities for financing are, however, directly linked to the central Apostolic Chamber.

Necessarily, the criticism of the procurations brought about some further changes in the system of financing the legations of papal legates *de latere* and other papal representatives. Apart from the income of the College of Cardinals, there were other resources of the central financial system that were to be used. Even if the sources of the money may have varied, it was always the income of the Chamber that was redistributed. The revenues could come from annates, services, subsidies, further taxes, but also from indulgences, the crusading fund, Turkish war support and so on (Lunt, 1965, pp. 57–136; Partner, 1980; Thomson, 1980, pp. 78–94; Maleczek, 2003, p. 52). Thus, it could still have been the province itself that paid for the stay of the legate; no longer, however, with the procurations, even if there are still some isolated mentions of them in the early 15th century (Maleczek, 2003, p. 50). Such revenues were usually gathered by the papal collectors, who could then redistribute the money on the spot and supply it to the legates (Schuchard, 2000, pp. 66–68). The most important result of the reconstruction of the financing of

the legates was that there were now standard salaries granted to the individual representatives of the pope. In 1422, for example, Cardinal Branda Castiglione, a legate to Bohemia with the task of organising the crusade against the Hussites, was assigned a salary of 200 florins per month drawn from the Apostolic Chamber. He was, however, still entitled to gain procurations (Eršil, 1996, no. 924; Maleczek, 2003, p. 50). The organisation and the amount of the salary developed during the early 15th century and had been clarified and stabilised by the second half of that century.

13.3 The salary of the legate

As a rule, the legates *de latere* were assigned a salary of 500 florins per month in the second half of the 15th and early 16th centuries. Such a salary is extremely high, even in comparison to other high dignitaries of the church. The annual income of most of the Italian bishoprics, for example, was much lower (Hay, 1977, pp. 110–117). The bishops and archbishops of Italy are, however, no match for cardinals representing the pope in the countries beyond the Alps. The cardinal, who fulfilled his task as a legate, had to surpass all the church hierarchy in the parts to which he was sent, and also – when possible – outmatch all the secular dignitaries including the king or the emperor. While the amount of salary is usually clear, there were more complicated problems of getting hold of the money and securing sufficient resources for such a costly undertaking. How did the financing work in practice?

The payments of the Apostolic Chamber must have come from the central budget, which was, however, not yet (or only very occasionally and without detailed analysis) planned in advance in the later Middle Ages (Partner, 1980, pp. 32–39). Thus, receiving salary from the resources of the Chamber might have been problematic, especially in the case of the *ad hoc* papal legates, whose expenditures could not be arranged and accounted for in advance. Still, a way of transmitting the desired financial support to the legate (or his procurator) must have been devised. In this case, four possibilities may have been used: (1) getting money directly from the Apostolic Chamber, which would mean direct transfer in Rome; (2) using bank services, which might be problematic in the areas without bank systems and Italian financial structures; (3) securing income on the basis of revenues due to the Chamber in the regions; and finally (4) investing private personal money in the undertaking and then negotiating with the Chamber for reimbursements. All these possibilities will be discussed, in greater or lesser detail, in what follows.

First of all, the legate had to be 'created' (in Latin the verb *creare* is used as in the case of creating cardinals). After the necessary ceremonial procedures and rituals, the legate is dispatched to his province and given the first payment, which – in this period – was usually equivalent to the salary for the first four months, that is 2,000 florins. This practice is attested by a number of sources and a number of individual legates. A special case is mentioned by Jacopo Gherardi da Volterra in his *Roman diary*: he speaks about the legatine creation of Cardinal Giovanni Battista Cibo (the future Innocent VIII) in 1481 and about his later refusal of the legation. 'They say among the people of the reason for renouncing the legation of the *Melfitensis* [the cardinal was also the bishop of Molfetta, close to Bari] that the two thousand florins that were given to him seemed to him too little. They were estimated not enough for the long lasting legation, but hardly for leaving Rome.' (Carusi, 1904, pp. 36–37). The legate was replaced by another one, a nuncio with the power of the legate *de latere* Orso Orsini, who surely did not spend so much money. It is clear, however, that the 2,000 florins were not to be spent on the whole legation, but rather were a cash advance on the first four months.

The cash payment was only one way of financing the later medieval legations. The rest was usually in the hands of the legate, who spent the local revenues of the Chamber or his own financial resources. The legates were usually (*ut moris est*) assigned 500 florins per month, as, for example, in the case of Bessarion in 1460.⁴ For further illustration, the Chamber paid 6,000 florins to Didacus de Vayas, a canon of Ávila and procurator of Cardinal Juan Carvajal, the legate in Hungary, in a series of instalments between September 1458 and July 1459 to provide for twelve months' salary in total.⁵ As stated above, this was the standard rate of payment in the second half of the 15th century and still in the early 16th, before the introduction of permanent nuncios. However, the advance payment of 2,000 florins at the start of the legation was usually the only money the legates got directly from the Apostolic Chamber before or during the legation; although we should note the above-mentioned cases of Cardinals Juan Carvajal and Bessarion. Ready money was thus a problem, as may be shown, for example, by the larger loan (600 florins) obtained by Cardinal Bessarion in Vienna in 1461, which he promised to pay back in Venice (Malezcek, 2003, p. 51; Mohler, 1942, no. 47). A few cases may be examined here to illustrate the system.

Just before Christmas, on 22 December 1471, Sixtus IV created five legates, who were later dispatched from Rome to all parts of Europe in support of the crusade that the new pope intended to organise against

the Ottoman Turks. One of the legates was again Cardinal Bessarion, who was an experienced legate following his earlier obligations in Germany or in Venice. In 1460, as stated above, he had spent some time in Vienna and there are references to his receiving 2,000 florins in advance and then five payments of 1,000 florins each in the registers of mandates of the Chamber (*Repertorium Germaniae*, 8, no. 513). Still, this was not enough, since his legation lasted for 22 months in total, he was due to obtain some 11,000 florins from the Chamber. After returning to Rome, the legate was obliged to present his accounts in the Chamber. Cardinal Bessarion did so in the form of a little paper booklet (*in quodam parvo quinterno papireo*) in December 1461 and the accounts were approved with the Chamber being still a debtor (*debetrix*) to the Cardinal of 3,000 gold florins of the Chamber.⁶ The records of the Chamber attest to 7,000 florins plus the debt of 3,000. If these numbers are correct, the accounts of the cardinal might have justified 1,000 florins at most. The *exitus* of the Chamber mentions the payment of 5,250 florins as late as the beginning of the pontificate of Sixtus IV, which was still paying off debts owed to the legate from the legations in Germany and Venice.⁷ Very soon, Bessarion became legate again and spent almost seven months on legation to France before he died in Ravenna. He had left Rome on 20 April 1472 and the registers of the Chamber show that he was paid two sums of 1,041 florins and 36 or 48 bolognini respectively before he departed from Rome.⁸ For both the major legations he was given 2,000 florins as an advance payment before he started his legation. The further salary was then 500 florins per month at least in the first case. The legation to France ended in total failure and in his death before he returned to Rome.

As one of the legates of 1471 Cardinal Marco Barbo was destined to go on legation to a wide area of the eastern part of Latin Christendom, that is Germany, Hungary, Poland and Bohemia and later his province was widened to include Scandinavia (Theiner, 1860, pp. 428–31, 435–6).⁹ Barbo left Rome on 22 February 1472 and returned on 26 October 1474, that is after more than 32 months, thus the salary was to be 16,000 florins. First, Cardinal Barbo was paid 2,083 florins and 24 solidi through the Medici bank a week before he left Rome,¹⁰ during his absence on legation there are no references in the Chamber's registers, but for a few payments to the legate. In February 1473 the standard payment of 100 florins for January 1472, when he still resided in Rome, is given to him; it is, however, not related to his legation.¹¹ Two months later, he got 766 florins from the papal collector in Poland and in July 100 florins from the chamber.¹² Finally, in April and August 1474 two

payments of 541 and 1,000 florins respectively are attested in the *exitus*,¹³ and the legate received a further payment of 1,000 florins in October.¹⁴ It is, however, quite clear that the legate must have used much of his own money to finance the legation. Only after he arrived back in Rome was the salary properly administered by the Apostolic Chamber. As in the case of Cardinal Bessarion, the legate must have presented the accounts of his legation, which were used for the settlement of the expenses of the legation. Cardinal Barbo presented his accounts¹⁵ and the final settlement of the Chamber was issued more than a year after his return to Rome, on 15 December 1475. The *camerlengo* Cardinal Latino Orsini signed a mandate that states that Marco Barbo is still a creditor to the Chamber for 4,825 florins; 1,000 florins of which were accounted for from the Chamber. Cardinal Latino assigned the outstanding debt of 3,825 florins on the revenues of the March of Ancona; however, it was impossible to draw more than 700 florins from those revenues and a new assignment was made in the land of Soriano nel Cimino near Rome, for a total of 3,125 florins.¹⁶ The accounts of Marco Barbo could have revealed much more than is available in the records of the Chamber, which come to only 11,416 florins.¹⁷ This means that Barbo's accounts should have shown the origin of further income of more than 4,500 florins. These could have come (at least in part) from the benefices in the province, since Cardinal Marco obtained a faculty to extract the revenues due to the Chamber, including the payment of the census, Peter's pence and the annates. The legate must have accounted for collecting such money.¹⁸ One such example (even though outside the legatine province of Marco Barbo) could be drawn from the records of the Chamber. In March 1473 Cardinal Latino wrote to the papal collector in Venice who was supposed to pay money to the messengers and couriers of Marco Barbo. The accounts from November 1472 to June 1473 show total expenditures of 64 florins.¹⁹ The case of Marco Barbo clearly exposes the system of financing from the Apostolic Chamber, including the tendency of the papacy towards temporal revenues in the second half of the 15th century (Thomson, 1980, pp. 82–83). However, the problem of identifying the sources of a large part of the salary remains.

The third legate of the five appointed in 1471 was sent to Naples. The case of Cardinal Oliviero Carafa was special since he was destined to lead the papal fleet, and thus the Chamber paid within a few months a larger sum of money for the costs of the navy. In total the Chamber disbursed almost 70,000 florins, including four months' of the legate's salary.²⁰ The study of the other two legates of 1471 does not add any further

information, but examples of yet other legates of the period may help elucidating the financial strategies of the Apostolic Chamber.

Similarly, as in the case of Marco Barbo, Cardinal Pietro Isvalies still had to settle the expenses of his legation a long time after he returned to Rome. His legation lasted for 35 months and he came back to the City in October 1503. It was only in May 1505 that the Chamber, in the person of *camerlengo* Cardinal Raffaele Riario Sansoni, confirmed its debts to Cardinal Pietro. The text explicitly mentions the total number of months and the monthly payment of 500 florins. Supposedly, the cardinal was paid 2,000 florins when leaving Rome and then three payments of 1,000 florins which he received in Hungary. The income of the Jubilee and the confessionals, which went to the servants of the legate, is mentioned as the source of one of the latter payments. Otherwise, the Chamber remained in debt to the cardinal in the sum of 11,500 florins.²¹

In 1479 Cardinal Ausias Despuig was one of three legates sent from the court of Sixtus IV. His legation to Germany lasted for six and a half months, as he returned on 1 December 1479 (Eubel, 1914, p. 42). His case is even more informative than that of Cardinal Marco Barbo, since at least short accounts of his travels are preserved in the records of the Chamber.²² The accounts were presented by the secretary of the legate before the Apostolic Chamber and agreed on by the clerics of the Chamber. The accounts show the same situation: he had been given 2,000 florins when leaving the City and was able to draw income from annates and a collation of benefices worth 87 ducats, the new Chamber gold coins, and 67 Rhenish guilders. Thus, he was owed 1,114 ducats and 18 bolognini by the Chamber. A later mandate of *camerlengo* Cardinal Guillaume d'Estouteville (May 1480) only stipulated that the debt should be paid from the revenues of the Chamber, but does not specify the specific sources.²³ In the same year, Cardinal Giovanni d'Aragona was sent as legate *de latere* to his brother-in-law the King of Hungary and Bohemia, Matthias Corvinus. As in other cases, the Chamber is confirmed to be the *debitrix* to the legate after he came back and presented his accounts to the clerics of the Chamber. The legate should have been paid 6,000 florins, but the accounts attest the receipt of only 3,208 florins and 22 solidi; thus the Chamber still owed 2,791 florins and 28 solidi.²⁴

The accounts of the legates and the individual settlements with the Apostolic Chamber clearly demonstrate that larger amounts of money must have been invested by the legates to sustain themselves in their legatine tasks. The real expenditures and outlays of the legates, however, cannot be ascertained on the basis of the available sources.

13.4 The salary of the nuncio

The salaries of the papal nuncios were naturally much smaller than those of the legates. They had a lesser need for display; their retinue and chancery were much smaller, they did not represent the person of the pope and thus did not need to spend so much. Their monthly income in the second half of the 15th century was usually around 100 to 200 florins; no clear rule, however, existed. Thus, Rudolf of Rudesheim (as *legatus missus cum potestate legati de latere* or *nuncius*), for example, was assigned 65 florins of the revenues of the Apostolic Chamber per month in 1465.²⁵ Papal nuncio Lorenzo Roverella, his companion and partner in organising the crusade against George of Poděbrady, the King of Bohemia, was able to obtain a sum of 150 florins per month from the *Depositeria della crociata* during the period of May to December 1467.²⁶ His salary was therefore drawn from the special fund for organising crusades; it was predominantly used against the Ottoman Turks, but the Hussites (Utraquists) of Bohemia and the heretical King George also got their share of attention. It meant, however, that the Chamber was able to use other sources of financial support. A few years later, in 1475, papal nuncio to Germany, Hungary, Poland and Bohemia Baltasar de Piscia was entitled to the salary of 80 florins per month with the retinue of eight horses.²⁷ A year later, papal nuncio Domenico Camisati with the same commission could extract a salary of 200 florins per month.²⁸ A special situation may be observed in the case of Angelo Pecchinoli, who was dispatched as a nuncio *cum potestate legati de latere* to the court of Matthias Corvinus, the King of Hungary and Bohemia, in 1488. The Apostolic Chamber had an individual agreement with the nuncio, who was to get 100 florins per month as a salary from the Chamber, or 120 florins from the revenues of the church of Cologne, whose archbishop Hermann von Hessen was imprisoned at the time.²⁹ It seems that the nuncios could serve as collectors when there were problems in collecting revenues beyond the Alps.

As the above-mentioned inventory of accounting books transferred to the Apostolic Chamber in 1485 shows, the nuncios were also obliged to present the accounts of their missions. A settlement of the expenses of a nuncio is preserved in the case of Antonio Grassi, who was dispatched to the Roman Emperor in 1478. Antonio Grassi accounted for the expenses incurred by himself and ten persons (with horses) in his retinue; in total he should have been paid one thousand one hundred and fifty-six and two-thirds florins, representing 100 florins per month. The Chamber had paid 450 florins and thus 706 florins remained to be accounted for.

However, due to the deaths of horses and some other losses the total debt of the Chamber was in fact 800 florins and the sum of 720 florins was later to be paid through the Florentine banks of the Ricasoli and the Arabatti families.³⁰

Some further individual documents, which were transcribed in the registers of the Apostolic Chamber, reveal the sources of revenue that the nuncios could draw on for their activities. Bartolomeo Maraschi, for example, in 1484 issued a receipt (*quitantia*) to the collector of Mainz Konrad Tues, which confirmed he had received 120 Rhenish guilders from the revenues of the Chamber.³¹ Similarly, in the same year, but a few months earlier, papal nuncio Angelo Geraldini received from the same papal collector 200 florins. The collector was even asked to assist Angelo by a direct *breve* from the pope.³² Not only the collectors, however, but also individual church institutions may have been approached by the legates or nuncios with requests for assistance. The papal nuncio Alexander Numai, for example, in 1475 obtained 20 Rhenish guilders from the annates of a female convent in Cologne.³³ And, last but not least, the case of yet another legate dispatched from Rome at the start of the pontificate of Sixtus IV, Cardinal Roderigo Borja (the future Alexander VI), who was sent to the Iberian kingdoms, shows that also the most highly-ranking legates *de latere* would do the same as nuncios, that is, collect money from local church institutions and issue receipts. He had collected 50 florins as half of the annates from the canonry of Seville.³⁴ As mentioned above, the legates as well as nuncios could have carried special faculties, which enabled them to collect almost any payment due to the Apostolic Chamber, or direct *brevia* from the local collectors, who could then help them.

13.5 Further resources

The legates and nuncios had still further opportunities for financial support. The legatine chancery produced a number of letters and charters that were to be paid for by the recipients. It was entitled to publish such charters in the same way as the Papal Chancery (Kalous, 2010, pp. 114–116; Schmitz-Kallenberg, 1904, pp. xvii–xix; Göller, 1907, pp. 319–324). This income, however, could not be too high, as the charters were in principle cheaper than those published by the Papal Chancery itself. In the 1450s the payment for a charter was stated at one ducat, in the beginning of the sixteenth century it was a ducat and a half (Wasner, 1958, pp. 316–322). Further research is needed to evaluate the possibilities for the legate's chancery to support itself, but with the

number of charters published it seems to be impossible for the chancery staff to live only on this income.

Naturally, there was the possibility of receiving gifts and presents on the spot. It was, however, forbidden by the legatine ceremonial, as drafted by Cardinal Francesco Todeschini-Piccolomini, but it is clear that such a regulation was not always observed. Gifts that could be accepted were food, drink and fodder (Wasner, 1958, p. 329). Such a situation is attested by local sources for a number of legates and nuncios. Cardinal Marco Barbo, for example, was accepting gifts in Wrocław only to some degree permitted by the stipulations of the ceremonial. The efforts of the Wrocław burghers to give him more were, in his eyes, related to the devoutness of the burghers rather than an attempt to bribe the legate (Kronthal and Wendt, 1893, no. 145). Similarly, in Wrocław, a nuncio Lorenzo Roverella accepted just 'three measures of oats, one quarter of white beer and one wineskin of malmsey' (Roth, 2003, p. 763). Jan Długosz, the Polish chronicler of the later 15th century, even told the story of the papal legate (or nuncio) Rudolf of Rüdesheim, to whom Casimir, the King of Poland, offered very generous gifts when the legate was leaving Toruń, including 40 florins, four silver dishes, two bowls and various beautiful dresses etc. The legate, however, 'with his celebrated modesty refused to accept them, so that he would not have disgrace'. The chronicler even mentions that such gifts were forbidden by the Apostolic See (Baczkowski et al., 2005, pp. 168–169). However, cases of legates (or nuncios) accepting lavish presents may be identified in the sources as well. Girolamo Lando, the papal legate (but not a cardinal legate) was given many presents by King George of Poděbrady, as well as by the burghers of Wrocław, who were in opposition to the king. In the latter case, financial gifts were also given to other members of the legate's retinue (Markgraf, 1872, p. 98). Similarly the nuncio with the powers of a legate *de latere* Achille Grassi accepted, in 1510, large and generous presents from Casimir, King of Poland, when he was leaving the royal court (Smołucha, 1999, p. 115). As in the case of the resources of the local benefices, these cannot be regarded as the regular and standard revenues of the legates.

13.6 Conclusions

All the cases show a standardised procedure in accounting for the financial needs of the papal legates and nuncios in the second half of the 15th and early 16th centuries. It is clear that financing of the papal legations had changed substantially compared to the 12th and 13th century *procuratio canonica*, which had come under criticism in the 14th century and

obviously was not enough to meet the changing needs of the cardinal legates. The financial support of the legates was always a special expense of the Apostolic Chamber and only with the use of nuncios for permanent representation did the financial system start to change (Partner, 1980).

The legates could have utilised the resources of their legatine provinces. Instead of procurations, however, these were the regular (annates, services, spoils and so on) as well as extraordinary (crusade money, indulgence, Jubilee and so on) revenues of the Chamber. A detailed accounting for all income received from these sources was required from the legates after they returned to Rome. Generally, the salary of 500 florins per month was typical for the legates *de latere*, that is for the cardinal legates, who must have used their own money to support themselves during their legations. If the sources show that, in the 1460s, the legates could have been sent more money in more instalments in addition to the first advance payment for four months (2,000 florins) before their departure, it is clear that in the later periods the Apostolic Chamber was unable to pay further instalments to the legates during their legations. As a rule, the legates became the creditors of the Chamber. The debt was then redeemed from the revenues of the Chamber, very often from its temporal income.

The late 15th and early 16th centuries therefore represent a transitional period for the legatine system. Not only was the general position of the legates, legal framework, ceremony and so on, changing, but also the financial organisation and support went through crucial changes. Permanent nuncios became the rule in the 16th century and the system gradually developed. The nuncios, then, were better suited to the needs of a planned budgetary policy. The *ad hoc* legates *de latere*, who stayed in their legations for three years or more, became history during the substantial changes of the 16th century.

Notes

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1. *Legatum Romanum eundo et redeundo honorifice tractabo et in necessitatibus suis adiuvabo*, cited in Robinson 2004, p. 406.
2. For example the *familiares* of Ausias Despuig in 1479, see Archivio Segreto Vaticano (hereinafter ASV), Reg. Vat. 680, f. 147r–148r.
3. For example, Gabriele Rangoni became Bishop of Alba Iulia (1472) and later Bishop of Eger (1475); Giovanni d'Aragona, Archbishop of Esztergom (1479/1484); Balthasar of Piscia, Bishop of Srem (1479); Pietro Isvalies, Bishop of Veszprém (1503).

4. ASV, Cam. Ap., Div. Cam. 29, f. 98r, ...*Et ut moris est idem sanctissimus dominus noster statuit, quod ipse legatus habeat pro sua provisione omni mense de pecuniis camere apostolice quingentos floren. auri de camera...*
5. ASV, Cam. Ap., Intr. et Ex. 440, f. 84r, 126r, 130v, 132r, 136r.
6. ASV, Cam. Ap., Div. Cam. 29, f. 235v–236r.
7. ASV, Cam. Ap., Intr. et Ex. 487, f. 103v.
8. ASV, Cam. Ap., Intr. et Ex. 487, f. 164v, 166v; compare with Eubel (1914, p. 38).
9. ASV, Reg. Vat. 680, f. 37r–40v, 35v, edited in Theiner (1860, pp. 428–431, 435–436).
10. ASV, Cam. Ap., Intr. et Ex. 487, f. 152r; cf. Archivio di Stato di Roma (hereafter AS Roma), Camerale I, Mandati della Camera Apostolica, vol. 845, f. 87v.
11. AS Roma, Camerale I, Mandati della Camera Apostolica, vol. 845, f. 186r.
12. AS Roma, Camerale I, Mandati della Camera Apostolica, vol. 845, f. 202r; vol. 846, f. 5v.
13. ASV, Cam. Ap., Intr. et Ex. 488, f. 158r; 490, f. 83v. For the first one cf. AS Roma, Camerale I, Mandati della Camera Apostolica, vol. 846, f. 66r.
14. AS Roma, Camerale I, Mandati della Camera Apostolica, vol. 846, f. 115v.
15. The accounts of the legation of Marco Barbo were still present in the chamber in 1485. After a cleric of the chamber Antonio da Forlì died in that year, the book of Marco Barbo's accounts was returned to the office from the cleric's home together with 80 other books including the accounts of other five legates and nuncios. An inventory of the cleric's books in ASV, Cam. Ap., Div. Cam. 44, f. 96r–97v; edited by Emil Göller (1924), pp. 233–236 (for the reference to Göller I would like to thank Marek Kowalski). The inventory mentions the accounts as *Computa reverendissimi domini cardinalis sancti Marci in partibus Germanie et Ungarie legati*.
16. ASV, Cam. Ap., Div. Cam. 39, f. 50r–51r. See also Schlecht (1903, p. 152), with some inconsistencies.
17. Apart from the mentioned places see also ASV, Cam. Ap., Intr. et Ex. 490, f. 106r, when Barbo got 1,000 florins. It is not clear, however, whether this sum is the one mentioned in Latino Orsini's mandate. If so, the sum accounted for in the records of the chamber would be 10,416 florins.
18. ASV, Reg. Vat. 680, f. 56r.
19. ASV, Cam. Ap., Div. Cam. 37, f. 218rv.
20. ASV, Cam. Ap., Intr. et Ex. 487, f. 163r–183v passim.
21. ASV, Cam. Ap., Div. Cam. 57, f. 140v–142v.
22. ASV, Cam. Ap., Div. Cam. 40, f. 71r–72r; edited in Göller (1923, pp. 239–240); summarised also in ASV, Cam. Ap., Div. Cam. 40, f. 62v.
23. ASV, Cam. Ap., Div. Cam. 40, f. 94v–95r.
24. ASV, Cam. Ap., Div. Cam. 40, f. 216rv.
25. ASV, Cam. Ap., Intr. et Ex. 459, f. 109v.
26. AS Roma, Camerale I, Depositeria della crociata, vol. 1235, f. 82r, 135r, 145v, 146r; Beneš 1966, pp. 747, 749.
27. AS Roma, Camerale I, Mandati della Camera Apostolica, vol. 846, fol. 216v, 218v.
28. ASV, Cam. Ap., Div. Cam. 38, f. 207r.
29. ASV, Cam. Ap., Div. Cam. 46, f. 188v, 195rv.

30. ASV, Cam. Ap., Div. Cam. 40, f. 61v–62r and f. 95v–96r.
31. ASV, Cam. Ap., Div. Cam. 46, f. 239v.
32. ASV, Cam. Ap., Div. Cam. 46, f. 240rv, 241rv.
33. ASV, Cam. Ap., Div. Cam. 39, f. 21v.
34. ASV, Cam. Ap., Div. Cam. 39, f. 15v.

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14

St Vitus Building Accounts (1372–1378): The Economic Aspects of Building the Cathedral

Marek Suchý

The elevation of the Prague bishopric to an archbishopric was followed by the building of the new gothic cathedral at Prague Castle (1344). The ancient seat of the rulers of Bohemia became also a centre of the Holy Roman Empire two years later, when Charles IV was crowned King of the Romans. Building activity started in the eastern vicinity of the old Romanesque basilica which was to gradually give way to the new building. The coexistence of both churches is witnessed in the preserved building accounts, which represent one of the most important sources for studying the history of building in the Middle Ages (PCA, MCA, Cod.XI/1–2; Neuwirth, 1890). Nevertheless, interpreting the accounting records from 1372 to 1378 presents certain problems in that they are composed of a great number of motley pieces that often seem to be unconnected bits of information dispersed over time (the accounting weeks). In terms of methodology, therefore, the first thing that needs attention is determining the integrity of the material, and not only in regards to its physical preservation. To the extent that it is possible, the data of the account entries also need to be ascertained, that is, everything that was and was not recorded and in what manner the entry was made.

The building accounts are recorded in two manuscripts that consist of quires of relatively heavy paper. The quire with the entries from summer 1374 was lost before being bound; consequently, there is a discontinuity between the two manuscripts. We lack also entries from the beginning of 1372 (Suchý, 2003, p. 7), moreover, the last preserved accounting year is irregular as the works had been halted by November, probably due to Emperor Charles IV, who was entering his last days at Prague Castle

(Neuwirth, 1890, p. 7; Hlobil, 2009). The accounts should be taken as a homogenous source where the individual entries are integrally connected. Undertaking a detailed comparison of the data referring to the individual subjects (for example blacksmiths, carpenters, stone-masons, and so on) on a synchronic and diachronic level can provide a basis for further research. However, the 'incomplete' records for the years 1372, 1374, and 1378 are ill-suited to such processing.

The account entries are recorded in gothic cursive script with numerous Latinized Czech and German expressions. The usual format of the weekly accounts begins with the wages for the building supervisors (architect or master mason, building foreman, custodian of the lodge and lodge servant). Next came the primary building crafts (carpenters, blacksmiths, masons, and stone setters). Two separate sections comprise wages to stonecutters and carters. The week was closed out with expenses for building materials, tools, and wages to craftsmen working on the building site irregularly, for example sawyers and rope makers. Scribal discrepancies like omitted words, eye-skip errors, and confusions of length and currency units (abbreviations) seem to confirm the idea that the accounts were composed from temporary notes, which were made during the working weeks and later (thematically) organized and recorded in the preserved quires, weekly expenses usually being recorded on a separate page. Moreover, the accounts could be seen in connection with the building directors' annual duty of financial audit (Neuwirth, 1890, pp. 367–368, nos 26 and 27; Brokešová, 1998, pp. 89–90) which seems to be confirmed by regularly recorded total weekly sums, occasionally accompanied by running totals of the stonecutters lodge, total expenses at the end of summer building seasons or even totals of the accounting book.

The payments were made in Prague groschen (*gr.*) and parvi (*p.*) in a usual ratio of 1:12, while the accounting ratio of 1:14 found on occasion might reflect bad quality coins; 60 groschen constituted an accounting/calculation unit of 1 *sexagena* (*sex.*) or shock. The accountant did not avoid all arithmetic mistakes but he sometimes (with some delay) corrected the discrepancies, which is reflected in occasional erasures, strokes or interlinear additions made by iron gall ink of a different tone. In addition, not absolutely all building expenditures were entered into the two codices. In particular, this applies to luxury items and also to water deliveries up until 1376, for example. On the other hand, we can find in the accounts entries related not to the cathedral, but rather to the Church of All Saints, whose construction in the vicinity of the cathedral was overseen by the same architect. However, the degree of incompleteness or

mistakes does not preclude the systematical processing of the accounts for the years 1373 and 1375–1377 (Suchý, 2003, pp. 7–9; for a detailed description and history of the manuscripts as well as data, organized in tables, graphs and maps, on which the following text is based see Suchý 2014a).

The workers were clearly remunerated for the work that they actually performed. This is especially true of stonecutters who could hardly have had exact knowledge of the number of cubits (and its parts) of stone that they processed, let alone the explicit mentions of retrospective payments of wages and the amounts of time necessary for producing a single construction piece. The Christian week commenced on Sunday (*Dies Dominica/feria prima*) and ended on Saturday (*sabbatum/fetia septima*), which corresponded to holidays and their sequence in the week (see e.g. Bláhová, 2001, pp. 273–278). Therefore, the accountant, like the other workers, celebrated Sundays, and oriented the weekly accounting data on the previous Sunday, to which they are dated. In this light it is necessary to reinterpret Čechura (1989, pp. 163–164), who claims that the wages were paid one week in advance. In addition, it should be noted that weekly salaries were usually higher in the summer, evidently due to the fact that the working day, largely determined by hours of daylight, was longer (see also Knoop – Jones 1933, pp. 116–118; Salzman, 1952, pp. 58–59, 68–70). Although the accounts do not explicitly use the terms ‘winter’ and ‘summer’ salary, they have been used below for convenience.

Although the accounts were kept in weekly intervals, there are payments for other periods of time. These include mainly six-month rewards for the building director (*rectori fabrice*) and clerk of the works or accountant (*notario fabrice*) who were recruited from the Metropolitan Chapter. Their salaries are often accompanied by similar payments for the master carpenter and blacksmith. Whereas these masters enjoyed the St Gall’s and St George’s payments as a bonus in addition to continuous weekly payments, the building director, Beneš Krabice of Weitmile, only received half-yearly pay of 5 or 6 sex. gr., that is 10 or 12 sex. gr. annually. However, most actions recorded in the accounts and linked to the managing of the building site are connected with the accountant Ondřej Kotlík, who, after Beneš’s death (1375), held both positions without receiving a corresponding pay rise. He continued to receive his 8 sex. gr. divided into two half yearly payments. However, this was not always the case since the earliest of the preserved accounts show that Ondřej received a weekly wage of 4 gr., similarly to the custodian of the stonecutters’ lodge Vícemilus. However, his name vanishes from the weekly

records in mid-March 1372 and appears on the St. George half-year pay list, where he is awarded 3 sex. gr., for he had not received his weekly wage. It is hardly mere chance that this change to the tariff comes about at a moment when Ondřej participated in tackling stone supply problems, that is when he and the architect (*magister operis*) toured stone quarries. At any rate, in the following years he regularly appears in the accounts in connection with his half-yearly payment of 4 sex. gr., which was in total an amount considerably exceeding his original weekly wage, which was equal to the salary of the custodian of the stonecutters' lodge. Interestingly, a charter preserved in a manuscript formulary mentions a salary of 20 gr., which was to be equally divided between two building directors, namely to Leonard Bušek and Mikuláš Holubec (Neuwirth, 1890, pp. 367–368, 389–390; Brokešová, 1998, pp. 85–99, esp. 89–90). The total amount would then correspond to the money paid to the building director and accountant in the 1370s.

The custodian of the stonecutter's lodge, Vímecmilus, received 4 gr. per week for his winter salary and 6 gr. for his summer salary. However, the winter and summer tariffs were not strictly fixed and the accounts show that the summer weekly tariff was awarded in winter and also contained an atypical wage of 5 gr. for four weeks in spring 1372. In the same year, Vímecmilus did not receive a single *parvus* in one week, but this debt was settled the following week, which was a common practice then. In addition to the weekly wage, the custodian of the stonecutter's lodge also received an irregular bonus (10, 12, 15 gr.) for his winter tunic sometimes explicitly in grey, which is undyed cloth (for grey cloth see Graus, 1950, pp. 106, 109–110). His total annual income ranged between 4 sex. 38 gr. and 5 sex. gr. in the period in question.

Just as the accounts sometimes combine the pay of the accountant and the custodian of the stonecutter's lodge, so this form of record appears with the custodian of the lodge and the lodge servant in 1377. Then, the custodian is untypically presented as *Custodi rerum*, unlike the preceding years when the payments were addressed to *Wieczemilo* and sometimes also described the position he held (*Wieczemilo custodi rerum*). The following records demonstrate that this was because Vímecmilus was replaced by Tomáš and the accountant took some time to become accustomed to this change. He did not begin to identify the custodian by his name (*Thome*) until May of the following year and did so also in connection with the lodge servant's pay. Their combined weekly pay was 10 gr. and was the sum of the summer tariffs of both professions: 6 gr. for the custodian and 4 gr. for the lodge servant (*famulus hutte*). In winter the servant received 1 gr. less, that is 3 gr. This division was not absolute

since the accounts contain the summer weekly rate in winter, which may be viewed as a small and 'quiet' benefit, while elsewhere a bonus of 2 gr. was awarded explicitly in the accounts. As in other similar cases, outstanding wages were remitted retrospectively. Unlike the custodian, the lodge servant did not receive clothing allowances and his lower weekly wage resulted in his total annual income ranging between 3 sex. 12gr. and 3 sex. 17 gr.

While the custodian and his assistant ran the operations of the lodge in the narrower sense, the construction foreman or *parler*, that is the building site supervisor, was the link between the *magister operis* or architect and the stonemasons. The foreman also received summer (20 gr.) and winter (16 gr.) weekly wages with bonuses sometimes explicitly described as allowance for fustian (30, 60 gr.) or furs (30, 60, 75, 80 gr.). Like the master carpenter and blacksmith, he also received a partial compensation for loss of wages in early 1372 and regularly, if not always, received the summer pay rate during the winter of 1377. However, it was then that the upper part of the supporting structure was being finished and the ruggedness of the 'terrain' required the presence of another foreman, who only received pay during part of the summer period and was not entitled to clothing allowances. The permanent foreman received (combining his weekly wages and bonuses) 17 sex. 57 gr.–18 sex. 16 gr. a year.

The first place in the weekly accounts is always reserved for the architect or master mason Peter Parler. His position within the structure of the enterprise is emphasized not only by the amount of his weekly wage, which did not distinguish between the summer and the winter season, but also by the fact that he was the only person whose wage of 56 gr. per week was never withheld due to any current shortage of work. It may not be a coincidence that 56 groschen correspond to the so-called 'king's marca' (see Mendl, 1926, pp. 120–126). The amount of the clothing allowances corresponds to his position in the lodge since he received 4 sex. gr. for summer and winter clothes (that is 8 sex. gr. annually), which equals the amount that Henry of Derby, a cousin of the King of England, paid for new clothes in Prague in autumn 1392 (Suchý, 2007, 131–132). In addition, his contract also contained another 2 sex. gr. per year as a winter heating allowance. Besides these permanent amounts Peter Parler was also awarded *ad hoc* sums for purchases, payments or bonuses related to the operation of the building site. These amounts were related to visits of quarries, measuring cords, nails and metal sheets for templates, and arching of the triforium, when 60 groschen were probably spent on a barrel of young beer distributed among the cathedral workers

(Suchý, 2003, pp. 63–64 notes 262, 264). He also received a payment of 15 sex. gr. for the tomb of the King Ottokar I of Bohemia (1192–1193, 1197–1230), in 1377, which raised his annual income from the usual range of 58 sex. 32 gr. to 59 sex. 37 gr. to 74 sex. 28 gr. The payment for the tomb is equal to the annual income of a regular stonecutter working on the cathedral for most of the year producing ‘basic’ construction pieces. It is, however, highly probable that the architect paid his helpers from that money, similar to the master smith Wenceslaus, who had to pay his journeymen from his cathedral salary. Unfortunately, it is not possible to calculate the incomes of Wenceslaus’s journeymen as the accountant does not mention how many of them worked in individual weeks producing, repairing and sharpening tools (stonecutter picks, mason trowels, shovels, hammers, and so on), and braces and nails (lath, plank, shingle). Wenceslaus himself was occupied in his workshop with orders of a more artistic nature (the pastoforium, the lattice work and the candleholder for St Wenceslaus chapel, see Suchý, 2003, pp. 35–40). We can also suppose other similar payments which were not recorded in the preserved manuscripts, and not only from the cathedral but also other construction sites Peter Parler oversaw.

The social stratification within the fabric’s expenses is reflected not only in the absolute figures, but also in the method of remuneration. Above all, the architect was not affected by limitations related to the season or number of holidays in a week and received the same wage all year round. The building foreman, custodian of the stonecutter’s lodge, lodge servant as well as master carpenter and his assistants were somewhat worse off, as they had to cope with a reduction of wages in the winter season. The wages of the stonecutters were only affected by the length of daylight indirectly, for they were usually paid by the cubit of stone processed, according to different piece-rates. It remains an open question whether they used artificial lighting (not only) in the winter months (see also Salzman, 1952, p. 62; Knoop-Jones, 1933, p. 121), but they were definitely limited by the number of holidays in the week or by the number of working days. Besides the regular year-round producers of basic construction components, there were also temporary workers delivering the same kind of pieces as well as temporary producers of expensive architectural sculpture (gargoyles, monsters, and so on) working in the lodge. Given that in a whole year stonecutters could have made about 12 ± 3 sex. gr., their diet may not have been so different from that enjoyed by the entourage of the future King of England, whose basic per capita expenses were also around 1 sex. gr. per person per month. However, food and drink represented only

20 per cent of the total household expenses for Henry of Derby in 1392 in Bohemia. All of the other money spent by Derby was swallowed up by transportation costs, and mainly by gifts and luxury items (including wine) (Suchý, 2007, p. 135). On the other hand, the temporary sculptors could have earned the same money (15 sex. gr.) in only 27 weeks, as Henrich did in 1373. His colleague Herman needed only a week more to get as much as 26.5 sex. gr. four years later.

Setting the stone blocks or construction components was done from the scaffolding, at times on prepared formwork, by the setters (*locatores*) and masons (*muratores*). The building accounts, however, do not describe the necessary division of tasks in laying the stonework. But it is probable that the setters used lead as a binding medium to anchor iron braces in joints, while the masons worked with lime mortar. In general the setters were paid better and were more numerous overall on the building site. They received c. 3 to 5 gr., while masons could earn only c. 2 to 3.5 gr. a day. The stonework itself took place during the summer months, the beginning and ending of which depended on the weather as well as its being co-ordinated with the work of the carpenters. But occasional work on the interiors of the choir chapels took place outside the main building period. Wages for the masons and setters were not differentiated by season. Moreover, the accountant did not prepare the weekly wage as the product of daily wages, but on the grounds of different weekly rates; the longer the working week was, the lower the average daily wages became. This means that the building office in fact partially compensated the setters and masons for lost profit due to holidays (see also Salzman, 1952, p. 66; Knoop-Jones, 1933, pp. 118–121) (Figure 14.1).

It is hardly surprising that the accounts contain a number of irregularities and different weekly rates, which correspond to weeks with different numbers of working days and holidays, show deviations of approximately 0.5 to 2 gr. per week (for irregularities in other accounts see Stejskal, 2001, pp. 15–16). These deviations are caused by the fact that the amount of the weekly tariff changed not only in relation to the number of holidays, but probably also according to the work's difficulty and the quality of coins available. The irregularities may also have been influenced by the absence of certain workers who may have worked fewer days than there were working days in the week, either voluntarily or because there was not sufficient work for them. However, it is essential to be careful, for in the week following Sunday 3 August 1376 masons received a six-day pay of 15 gr. and setters a mere 18 gr., which might suggest that the setters worked one day less. However, the resulting

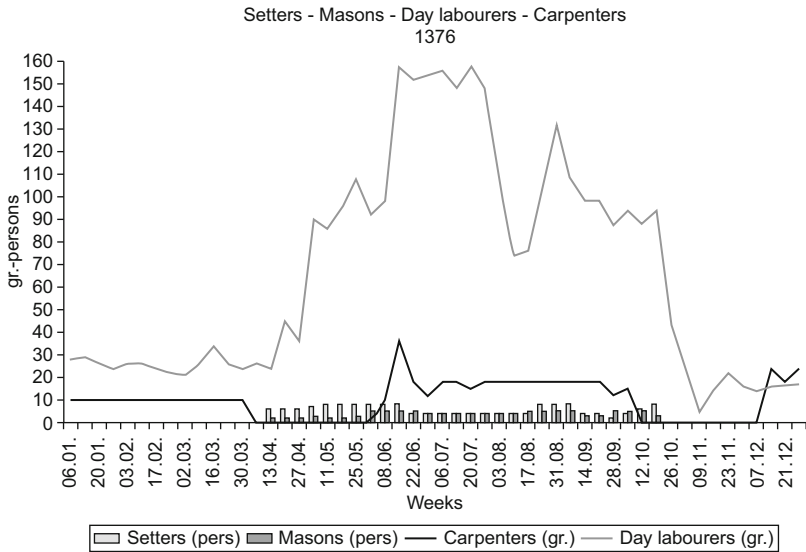


Figure 14.1 Weekly activity of setters, masons, carpenters and day labourers measured by their numbers at the building site or weekly expenses on their salaries in 1376

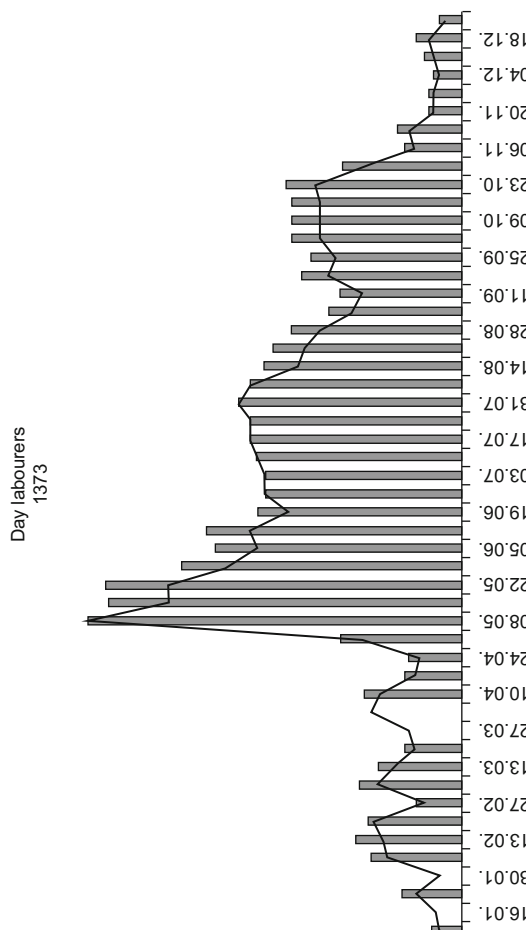
total of their wages corresponds with the six-day rate similar to that of masons; the accountant or writer simply made a mistake in entering 18 gr. instead of 20 gr. Of course, one cannot rule out the possibility that the six-day tariff may have been paid in a five-day week or the five-day tariff in a four-day week. To take another example from 1372, when the accountant specified the holidays in weeks regularly and nominally in relation to setters' and masons' wages, he did not include the holidays of St Ludmila or St Bartholomew the Apostle even though both are listed in synod statutes (Polc-Hledíková, 2002, p. 144) and the celebration of St Ludmila's holiday is explicitly mentioned in the following year. In this context, a group of Prague groschen struck in the years 1327–1340 under John of Luxembourg was found in the wall of the gothic St Lawrence church in Prague at a place which was probably accessible only from scaffolding. The 17 silver coins might represent a (hidden) weekly salary of a mason, stone setter or carpenter (journeyman) (Militký, 2006).

Being aware of the ensuing inaccuracies, one can conclude that a stonemason could earn (without irregular bonuses and bath and beer allowances) between 5 sex. 42 gr. and 8 sex. 38 gr. if he worked all possible days. Similarly a mason could get an annual income of about 4 sex.

22 gr. – 6 sex. 25 gr. The relatively low amount reflects the fact that the setters and masons could not work outside the summer season (owing to the mason technology), with an exception of occasional interior work. But it is highly probable that they worked as stone cutters in the lodge during the winter season, not necessarily only at the cathedral construction site. Otherwise, their annual income would be close to that of day labourers working at the cathedral for most of the year. They could make c. 3.5 sex. gr. *per annum*, which was an amount roughly corresponding to the contemporary subsistence minimum (Graus, 1949, pp. 81–84; Šmahel, 1967, pp. 45–46).

Whereas the masons and stonemasons usually worked the full working hours in a week, the day labourers and master carpenter's assistants (journeymen) often worked less than the maximum. Therefore, they received pay according to the number of days that they actually worked, but their wages were often recorded as aggregate amounts paid to all workers on the site and their numbers could change in the course of the week (Figures 14.2 and 14.3). This was caused by the technological demands of the building works, which required workers in these professions to be flexible in response to changing demands for their skills. However, their daily wages were the least favorable since they did not take into account holidays. Yet, one needs to be aware that the rates were not fixed and the daily wage did not always simply copy the winter or summer tariff, as in the cases of other professions with seasonally differentiated wages. But it can be stated that the day labourers salary ranged between 8 and 14 parvi. The most common daily tariff for carpenters was 2 to 3 gr., but there also appears 1 and 2.5 gr. They were hired by master carpenter Wenceslaus who received weekly wages (20 gr. in summer and 16 gr. in winter) and an annual fixed bonus of 4 sex. gr. On top of this, a special yearly payment of 24, 30, and 45 gr. was then provided for winter or summer clothes. His usual annual income then was between 18 sex. 10 gr. and 20 sex. 53 gr., but it increased to 24 sex. 58 gr. in 1373 thanks to a special bonus of 4 sex. 16 gr. for cutting down the trees Emperor Charles IV donated for cathedral construction from his forest in Krivoklát (Pürglitz).

Carters represented an entirely special accounting category and were paid by the number of wagons or pieces of stone transported. The building site contracted nineteen professional carters from the Prague conurbation and Hradčany, however, most of the stone was carried by carters from villages situated near the quarries, which made transportation more efficient and cheaper. The building stone came mostly from sandstone quarries in a nearby area north-east of Prague (approximately



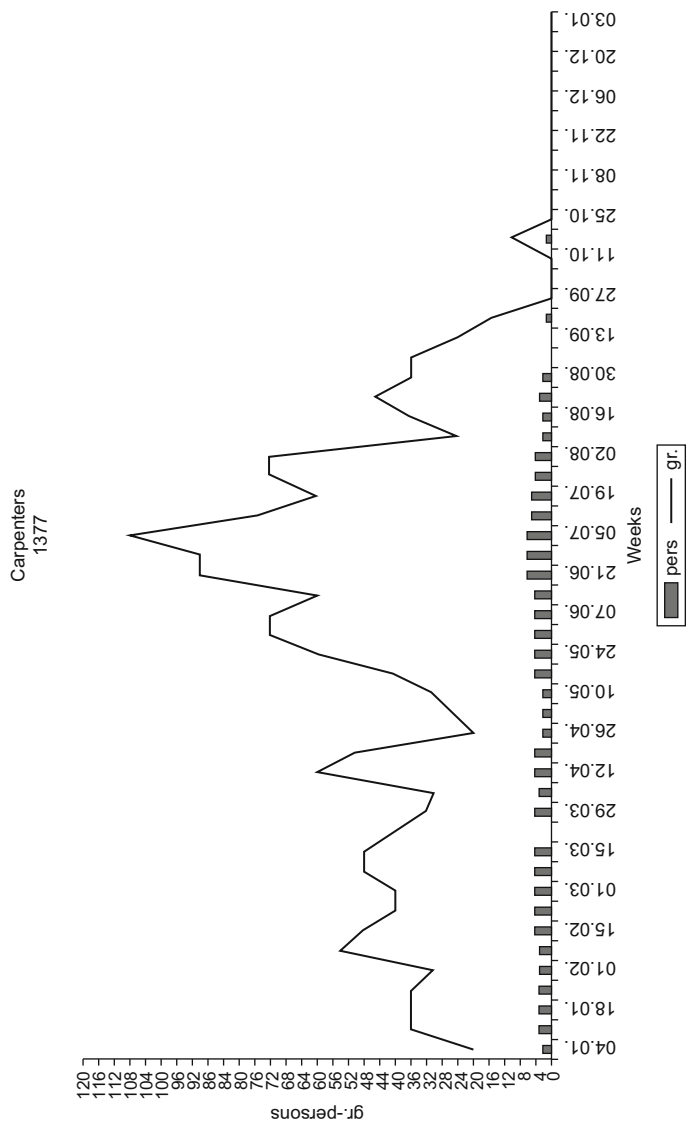


Figure 14.3 Weekly expenses for carpenters and their numbers (when recorded) at the building site in 1377

25 km). The better quality coarse-grained sandstone came from the quarry in Kamenné Žehrovice about fifty kilometers west of Prague. In rare instances poor quality sandstone from the local Petřín area was also quarried. The greater the distance, the more worthwhile it was to send to quarries the dimensions of the required pieces, so the stones could be worked in advance on site. That way, the wagon driver would be transporting less potential waste. The cost of transporting raw, unhewn stone made up 80 per cent of the total costs (quarrying and transport); whereas for partially hewn stone transport came to approximately 76 per cent of the total (Suchý, 2003, pp. 15–17). The number of different carters employed ranged between 36 and 71 in individual years. A significant number of them were from the village of Zeleněč, with 21 carters transporting material to the site in 1373; while the total number of local carters contracted between 1372 and 1378 totaled 31. Those carters with the highest profits in individual years were Michal (1373: 12 sex. 41 gr. in 22 weeks) and Míka of Zeleneneč (1376: 13 sex. 18 gr. in 14 weeks; 1377: 36 sex. 22 gr. in 27 weeks), except for 1375 when Duchek of Kostelec got the highest pay for transportation (14 sex. 35 gr. in 26 weeks).

In most cases it is impossible to guess the relations between individual carters from a single village; although the accounts sometimes explicitly identify siblings (even a sister). At the same time, it is clear that the higher earnings could only be achieved by using several wagons, as is sometimes explicitly mentioned. In this context it is necessary to note that the name of a carter from one village sometimes appears twice in the accounts in a single week. It is impossible to exclude the possibility that these records may have pertained to two different persons in some cases. However, the double records of a single name are much more likely to have been caused by the method of compiling the accounts. A carter could send a single wagon or several to different locations in a single week. A single carter's deliveries from different quarries may have been recorded separately in the accounts, each having its own section, which is proved by the example of Pešík of Prague who sent his wagons to Kostelec and Horoušany within a single week in 1372. However, the accountant often put carters from two quarries in a single section, which was sometimes made clear in the heading. But he failed to unify the transports of individual carters from different quarries in a single entry, so for example Havel and Michal of Nehvizdy appear twice in one week, for the writer recorded deliveries from Brandýs and Horoušany in the same section. This method of bookkeeping is apparent with other carters as well. However, the accountant often failed to mention the origin of the stone in the heading or mentioned only a single quarry,

which does not necessarily mean that stone was not transported from other locations, especially when a single carter's name is recorded twice or more in a week. A simple mechanical counting of recorded quarries in order to reconstruct their participation on the deliveries to the cathedral building is therefore misleading (for this method see Rybářík, 1994, pp. 335–336).

Generally, one can conclude by stating that some carters from rural areas also became permanent suppliers of stone to the building site of St Vitus Cathedral. This is reflected by their earnings being comparable to the maximum earnings of Prague professional carters such as Pešík of Prague, who earned 13 sex. 13 gr. in 15 weeks (1376). However, a Prague-based carrier certainly worked more than 15 weeks in a year and also had income from other sources. Given the fact that 1373 was exceptional as the deliveries only took place in winter and a number of village carters also delivered stone to the cathedral in the summer, it is possible that the deliveries to the Prague cathedral were not the sole source of income for village carters either. This view may be supported by the fact that the cathedral quarry in Horoušany only operated as a circular lot probably delimited within a broader stone exploitation area, where stone was quarried and transported to other building sites as well. Other locations are likely to have operated in a similar manner as is demonstrated by a statement from 1412 that farmer Petr of Žehrovice supplied local stone for the portal of New Town Hall (Vítovský, 2004, p. 336). The numbers of carters appearing temporarily in the accounts correlates with the numbers of stonecutters similarly operating on the site. This suggests that village carters were contracted *ad hoc* to supply the required volumes of stone, which was matched by the numbers of stonecutters that likewise depended on the current development of the building works (Figure 14.4).

Unlike the masons recruited (not only) from the Prague conurbation, a village carter was not necessarily entirely dependent on this trade and may have represented an economically advantageous reservoir of labour. On the other hand, one has to admit that, as most of the stonecutters temporarily appearing in the accounts also worked outside the cathedral building site, so village carters may have supplied stone to other building sites in Prague, too. It is therefore impossible to describe the farmers' economic situation precisely from the accounts, but it is clear that some of them earned amounts comparable to those paid to professional carters based in Prague. The most efficient of them equaled the earnings of permanent stone cutters; others earned enough to cover their annual land rents. Any surplus could be used to cover the living

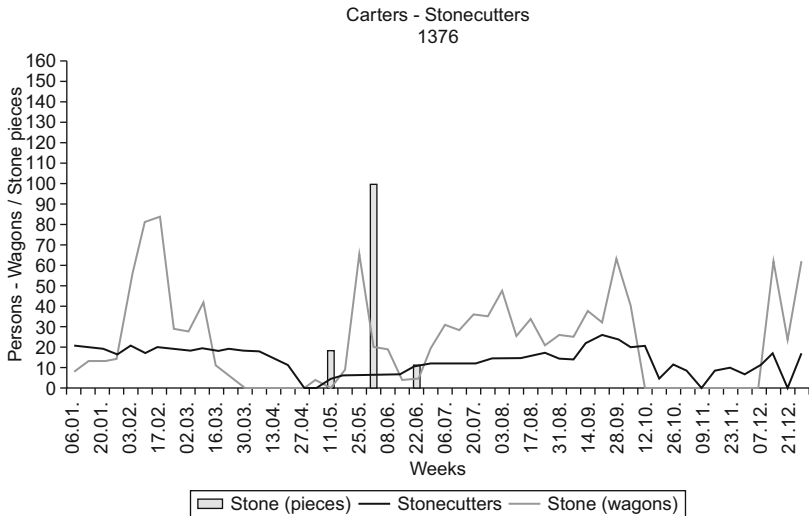


Figure 14.4 Weekly activity of carters and stonecutters measured by their numbers at the building site and amount of wagons or stone pieces delivered in 1376

expenses of younger sons on a single farm, who could stay in the country instead of going to the town to become day labourers. On the other hand, one cannot exclude the possibility that the money could increase the living standards of families from which the carters were recruited. Unfortunately, we know neither how many farmsteads there were in the villages recorded in the accounts nor the populations of these villages. But it is impossible to ignore the fact that an average village around Prague could house some 11 to 20 farmsteads in the second half of the 14th century; and the number of carters from Zeleneč ranged between 9 and 21 in individual years (Suchý, 2003, pp. 18–20).

Another group that were not predominantly dependent on the cathedral construction were the merchants who delivered building materials or equipment such as lead, lime, charcoal, ropes, iron, wood, and so on. Their annual income is therefore impossible to estimate but if, for example, lime-burners delivered their products only to the Prague Cathedral, they would have earned only 3–6 sex. gr. a year minus operating costs, which included expenses for firewood, limestone, repairing of the limekiln, equipment, and beer. That amount would only cover part of the rents of their houses or workshops. On the other hand, a town councilor, Frana Terkler, was evidently a well-off man, who could afford to donate two thirds of the year's consumption of lime to the

cathedral in 1375. That might be even seen as a private act of devotion to the most prominent church in the kingdom. Especially since we know that he expressed his religious feelings more openly in the town by founding an altar with a requiem mass for his family in the Church of Our Lady before Týn with an annual rent of 15 sex. gr. and a rabbit from his New Town and village estates. But the Prague Cathedral was probably not the only building site he provided with lime, not to mention that lime was also needed by other craftsmen such as parchment makers or tanners who used lime solution for de-hairing skins. Moreover lime burners also produced bricks (Suchý, 2014).

With regard to the accounting inaccuracies and the fact that not absolutely all items were recorded in the quires of the preserved building accounts, it is possible to estimate the financial ratio between different building activities in particular years (1373, 1375–1377). The greatest portion of money was spent on preparing the stone, that is, for stonemasons (31–38 per cent) and carters (11–19 per cent). Stone setters and masons consumed 4 to 10 per cent, while the day labourer's salary constituted 4 to 8 per cent of the total. A full 11 to 12 per cent was swallowed up by the annual pay of the building administrators (director, accountant, *magister operis*, *parler*, custodian and servant of the lodge). Relatively high expenses for carpenters and wood in 1373 (12 per cent) can be seen in connection with the commencement of works on a high choir including the system of buttresses above Peter Parler's choir chapels. The expenses for wood stabilized at 4 to 5 per cent during the next years before rising higher again (8 per cent) in 1377 due to works on the upper, difficult-to-access parts of the buttresses above Matthias of Arras's chapels, which required appropriate scaffolding, including a new (third) machine (crane). This accords with expenditure on cooper, rope-making and grease, which rose to 2 per cent in 1377. Similarly, the usual annual expenses for smiths were 4 to 5 per cent, but purchases of iron rods and braces for the windows above the chapels of Matthias of Arras increased the amount to 21 and 14 per cent in the years 1375–1376 (Figure 14.5–14.8). Binding materials comprised only 5 to 8 per cent but it is worth noting that most of this money was spent on lead (74 to 95 per cent) and charcoal (1 or 4 per cent) which was necessary for its melting, while lime mortar (sometimes with eggs) constituted only a minor part of the total (Figure 14.9). When there was no lead bought in 1377, the expenses for binding materials decreased to a mere 2 per cent. The other special irregular expenses for painters, couriers, brooms and so on, comprised up to 1 per cent of the total annual expenses.

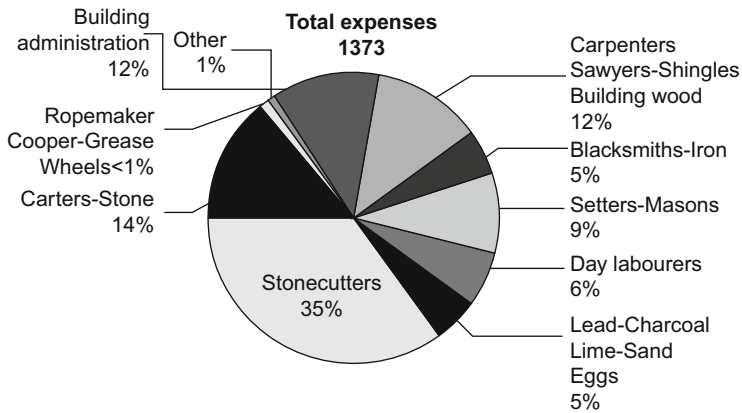


Figure 14.5 Total expenses for different building activities in 1373

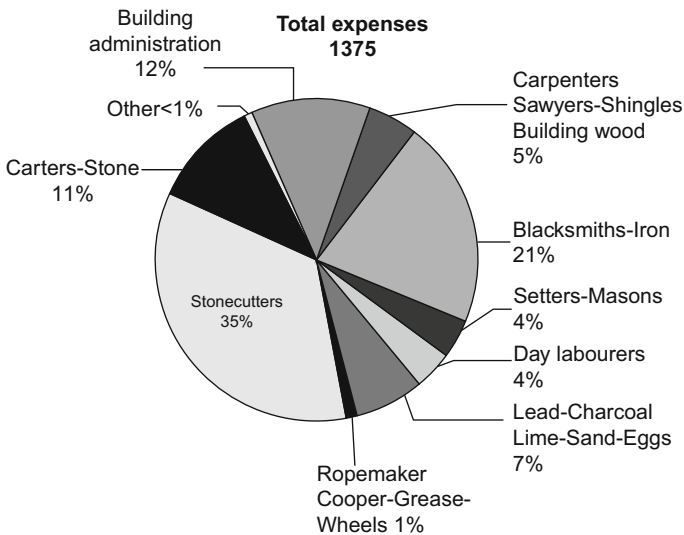


Figure 14.6 Total expenses for different building activities in 1375

The basic source of funding for building the Gothic cathedral was John of Luxembourg's donation of a tithe of the tax revenue from the silver mines (*urbura*) in Bohemia to the Prague Chapter for decorating the tombs of St Wenceslaus and St Adalbert and for the construction of the new church (1341) (Emler, 1892, pp. 411–413, no. 1029;

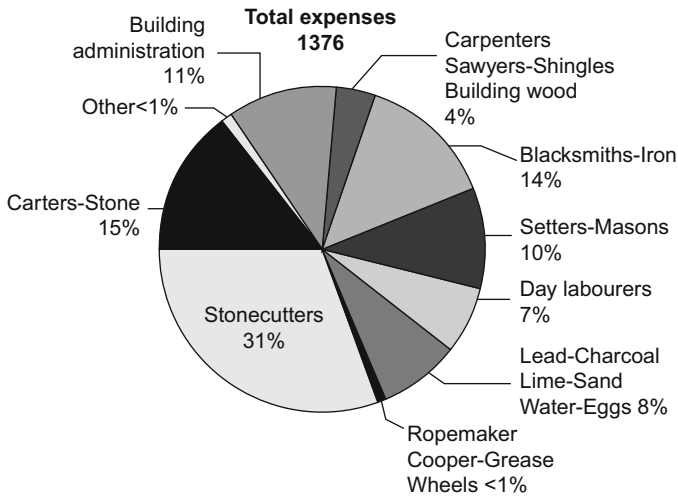


Figure 14.7 Total expenses for different building activities in 1376

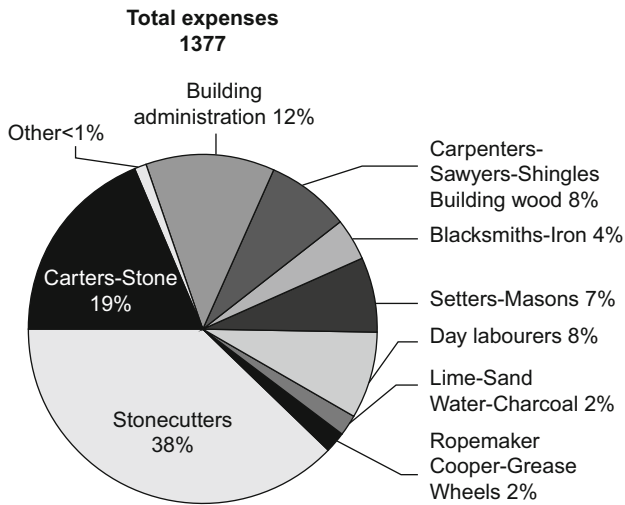


Figure 14.8 Total expenses for different building activities in 1377

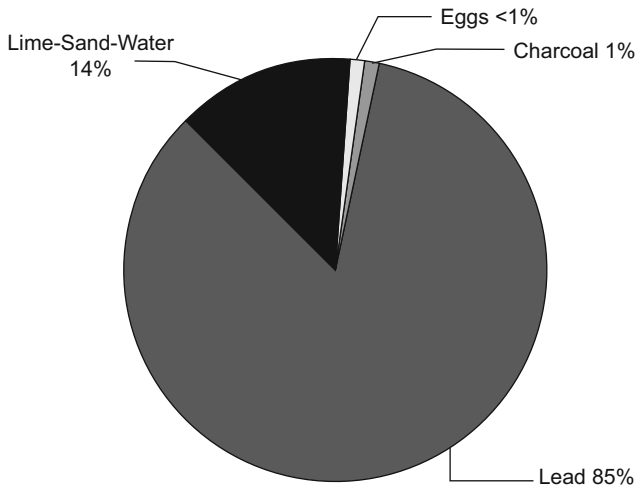


Figure 14.9 Expenses for binding materials in 1376

Eršil – Pražák, 1956, p. 60, no. 184; see also Šolle, 1981, pp. 113–121). The Metropolitan Chapter also received an income from its own mines in Kutná Hora (Kuttenberg) and the land owners' share of the royal urbura (see Sternberg, 1837, pp. 102–106; Eršil – Pražák, 1956, pp. 219–222, no. 784; Čelakovský, 1916, pp. 66–89, esp. 84–86, 117; Pošvár, 1951, p. 20; Jánošíková, 2007, p. 40). But these monies were evidently used for everyday expenses, especially for payments to the cathedral clergy participating in divine services (see Čelakovský, 1895, p. 496; PCA, MCA, XIII/21, f. 1r-2r, 9r, 18v). However, it was probably not a pure coincidence that the land owners' share of the royal urbura was administered by a canon, Wenceslaus of Radeč (PCA, MCA, Cod. XXVIII/1, f. 35rv, 36rv, 28r, 37r, 38r, 39r, 41rv, 43rv, 45r, 46r, 47rv, 48rv, 52rv, 55r), who was also (as a building director) in charge of the donated tithe of the royal tax revenue from the silver mines in the kingdom, which was ascribed to the construction of the new church (Neuwirth, 1891, p. 121, no. 12). Of course, it is hard to say how much money actually ended up in the building fund, but it is not without interest that the total annual revenue of the Royal Chamber for the period of King Wenceslaus IV (1378–1419) has been estimated at c. 26,970 sex. 16 gr. The annual income from the mining and minting royalties might have been a minimum of c. 3,500 sex. gr. in the 1370s. Meanwhile, in 1373, 1375, and 1376, expenditures for building the St Vitus Cathedral varied

within the range of c. 833 to 849 sex. gr. and were comparable with tax revenues from dowry towns (855 sex. gr.). In 1377, expenditures rose in connection with the completion of the buttresses over the chapels of Matthias of Arras (and also the payment for the tombstone of Ottokar I) to as high as c. 973 sex. gr., a figure roughly equal to the annual interest from royal cities (975.5 sex. gr.) (for the royal incomes see Nový, 1992, pp. 329–339).

Mine tax revenue thus obviously would not have been enough to cover just the construction of the shell of the building. This is also shown by the fact that, since the days of Archbishop Ernst of Pardubice and his statutes (1350), contributions towards construction were required not only from the new archbishop, but also from the chapter's officials and canons (Hledíková, 2008, pp. 146–147; Hledíková, 1972, p. 41 note 176). This money can be occasionally seen in chapter records (Cod. VIII/2, f. 9r, 10r, 13r) and the building accounts themselves reveal that director Beneš Krabice donated his half year salary (6 sex. gr.) to the fabric in April 1374 as compensation for unpaid revenue from his newly acquired prebend (see also Tadra, 1893, p. 56, no. 287). Fines or their parts were ascribed to the building fund by the chapter statutes as well as diocesan legislation (1349–1409?) and courts (Podlaha, 1905, pp. 4, 16, 20; Polc–Hledíková, 2002, pp. 120, 123, 138, 191, 197, 199, 201, 203, 212, 250, 270, 273, 276–277, 282–283, 288, 290; Polc, 1994, pp. 38–40; Kopečková, 2013, pp. 40–41, no. 53 (1385); Tadra, 1893a, p. 279, no. 193 (1384); 1896, p. 194–195, no. 121 (1396), pp. 195–196, no. 123 (1396); Neuwirth, 1890, p. 377–381). The church also turned to all of the clergymen in the Prague diocese to raise money and the collectors had rights to grant indulgences to those who contributed (Hledíková, 2008, pp. 147–148; Neuwirth, 1890, pp. 382–385). In this connection, we can see the payment of 2 sex gr. to a diplomat to Roman Curia in November 1372, while collector Konrad received 1 sex. gr. for his domestic effort in the Žatec deanery in May 1373. He was not evidently the only one, as he appears in 1386 together with his colleague Theodoric (Tadra, 1893a, p. 375, no. 109). Ten years later, we also encounter Wenceslaus *petitor/questor fabrice ecclesiae Pragensis* (Tadra, 1896, p. 222, no. 216, p. 312, no. 9, p. 405, no. 338, p. 406, no. 343, p. 408, o. 355, p. 410, no. 369). The necessity of mobility to the whole process seems to be confirmed by a payment of 50 gr. to an anonymous writer (*scriptor*) for a new horse in June 1373. Moreover, special boxes for contributions to the fabric fund were to be placed in all churches (1380–1384) (Hledíková, 2009, p. 18).

Money donated or ascribed to the fund can be traced through various sources (see e.g. Tadra, 1893a, p. 278, no. 186 (1384), p. 317, o. 47 (1385);

Tadra, 1900, p. 275 (1408); Čelakovský, 1916, p. 86 (1407)), however, not all of it necessarily reached the fabric fund. Disputes might be settled without resorting to sanctions while donations, especially those in the form of annual rents (Pátková – Pelikán, 2002, p. 62 (1405); Mendl, 1925, p. 162, No. 418 (1409); Tomek, 1872, p. 116; PCA, MCA, Cod.II/11, pp. 120–121; Cod.III/7, f. 162rv (1419) might be difficult to secure even from among the chapter officials (Kostílková, 2003, p. 12). On the other hand, donations in connection with the choir chapels can be seen as targeted funding from elite court circles (Hledíková, 2008, pp. 150–151). One might wonder whether construction of the high choir would have been as attractive to donors as the chapels, but for its construction Charles IV himself gave a part of his Křivoklát (Pürglitz) oak forest, the monastery in Zderaz donated a sandstone quarry in Horoušany, and the lime-burner Frana Terkler gave a gift equal to one-third of the average annual consumption of lime. A large number of similar gifts might never have been recorded in the accounts. This applies at least to the precious stones for the incrustation of St Wenceslaus chapel, which were probably given by the Emperor (Vítovský, 1992, pp. 7, 9; Skřivánek, 1987, pp. 19, 28–45; Skřivánek 1989, pp. 73–78).

Most of the expensive decoration of the church was financed from sources other than the construction of the shell of the building and therefore recorded in other accounts. This seems to be proved by a fragment of chapter accounts containing also the sacristan's expenses for repairs to St Wenceslaus tomb (1371) and other goldsmith work. Significantly, the amounts were recorded predominantly in gold florins and at least some of this money was also used for St Sigismund's chapel (PCA, MCA, XIII/21, f. 9r–11r; some of the records published by Podlaha – Šittler, 1903, p. 66 note 1; Neuwirth, 1891, pp. 42–43, 118–119, No. 8; J. Vítovský, 2004a, p. 663). The complexity of the accounting system is illustrated by associated payments to the master carpenter Wenceslaus (with helpers), and his namesake master blacksmith, including purchases of beams, planks and nails (PCA, MCA, XIII/21, f. 11r). In this connection can also be seen the payment to *magister operis* Peter Parler for the tomb of Ottokar I, which was made at the request of the Emperor Charles IV (1377). The other five contemporary tombs of the Přemyslid rulers were not registered in the building accounts, and neither were other major sculpture works. This means that the tombs had to be financed from other sources, probably by Charles IV himself (see also Neuwirth, 1890, p. 495). Only exceptionally, when the situation required, was one tomb paid for directly from the fabric fund. The Emperor could have compensated this extraordinary expense later, for example by the temporary

increase of money which came to the building fund from the royal mine tax revenue. The intense communications between the chapter building office and the Emperor are confirmed by expenses for a messenger, who was to meet him in Mühlberg *super certis negotiis fabrice* in December 1372 (for Charles' stay in Mühlberg see Kavka, pp. 147–149). Another mission might be connected with the donated timbers, which were floated to Prague from the Emperor's forest in Křivoklát (Pürglitz) and needed to be freed from the Vyšehrad custom fee (Suchý, 2003, pp. 21–22). Charles IV's active role in financing the cathedral was also praised by canon and building director Beneš Krabice of Weitmile in his *Cronica ecclesie Pragensis*, when he stated that John of Luxembourg donated the incomes from urbura with the consent of his sons Charles and John (Emler, 1884, p. 495). An anonymous author of *Series ducum et regum* even claims that the Emperor built the church at his own expense (Dobrovský – Pelzel, 1884, p. 432).

But as we have seen, the funding was more complicated. The financial complexity is illustrated by the testamentary donation of 1,050 sex. gr. made by the Emperor's nephew, Margrave Jobst (1412) for the erection of three new altars in the cathedral. The Chapter used the money to buy annual rents to secure its staffing and equipment but the actual physical erection of the altar was financed from money from Ostrožné. Its source was a fee paid by a new abbot, prior, or abbess to the king, which Charles IV's son Wenceslaus IV donated (1388) to the chapter for the decorating of the St Wenceslaus tomb (Kostílková, 2003, pp. 8–9; Ryba, 1997, pp. 86–92). The flexibility of the accounting procedure also seems to be confirmed by the fact that the building accounts contain payment to quarriers in Zeměchy from the building fund of the Church of All Saints, which was being built in the vicinity of the cathedral by the same architect (Suchý, 2003, p. 9 note 24). Jobst's donation would have been more than enough to cover annual building expenditures in the 1370s and it is not without interest that, according to Beneš Krabice, the same amount of money was bequeathed to the fabric by the first archbishop of Prague, Ernst of Pardubice (Emler, 1884, p. 530). The building or financing of the cathedral can therefore be seen as an example of multi-source funding (see also Vroom, 2010) with flexible cash flow reacting to the actual financial situation or progress of the works. But despite all the effort, the fabric had to face temporary shortages of cash that sometimes led to delayed payments to some workers, especially stonemasons, carters and lime-burners. It is, however, worth noting that (according to the preserved building accounts) such inconvenience never affected *magister operis* Peter Parler.

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15

‘De mandato dominorum divisorum ...’ : Finances in the Life of Prague’s Metropolitan Chapter

Martina Maříková

Prague’s Metropolitan Chapter is usually mentioned in relation to some of its more important features, St Vitus Cathedral or the treasure kept there (Hledíková, 1997; Maříková, 2011a). The above-mentioned features of the Chapter have also another, lesser-known aspect – that is the material provision for the Chapter as a whole and for its individual members (Pátrová, 1997; 2006; 2008; 2011), without which this institution could hardly have fulfilled its liturgical duties according to the so-called *Aachen regula* (Institutio, 1906) establishing the rules regulating the life of the Chapter clergy. This commonplace, thus-far ignored, aspect is reflected in its accounting registers, which are subject of this article.

15.1 Content of the registers

The collection of pre-Hussite accounting registers from the Chapter consists of four parts and two fragments from 1358 to 1418, which are now kept in the Archive of Prague Castle. In the Czech Republic, this is probably the most completely preserved collection of accounting materials from that time period. The surviving financial documents have been surveyed by Graus (1957, pp. 339–356) and Nový (1975, pp. 47–87). However, a more detailed look at the time span of the individual documents suggests that it is only the remainder of a collection that was originally much more extensive. Table 15.1 shows clearly that the material contains significant time gaps, both between the different documents and within the documents themselves. Thus, for example, we have no material at all for the larger part of the 1370s and 1380s.

Table 15.1 Time span of accounting registers

Signature	f.	Time span
zl. 12/18	6	1358, 1360
zl. 13/21	20	1359, 1361, 1364, 1365, 1367, 1369, 1371
cod. 8/1	58	1363–1372, 1380, 1393–1408
cod. 27/1	80	1396–1418, 1420
cod. 27/2	33	1408–1409, 1411–1417
cod. 28/1	60	1393–1399

The common denominator of all six extant accounting registers is the fact that their origin was closely bound up with the administration of the so-called common treasury (*cistula communis*) (Cod. 27/1, f. 44v, 48v) of the Prague Chapter (Maříková, 2008, pp. 81–91). It was a treasury that was kept in the sacristy of St Vitus's Cathedral (Statuta, pp. 10, 21, 26), whose income financed the expenditures of the Chapter as a whole and the portions paid out to the members of the Chapter, who were in residence (Statuta, p. 40; Cod. 8/1, f. 1r). Its income consisted of a certain portion of the income from benefices and some other possessions of the Chapter and rents entrusted to the administration of the Chapter's clergy, which, according to the statutes, were intended for re-distribution. But thanks to the sophisticated system of property administration and the changeable way of keeping the registers, none of the exemplars reflects the entirety of this picture, but only its diverse segments (Table 15.2).

The incomes of the common treasury can be formally divided into two main groups; firstly sums that were regularly transferred by the administrators of the different types of estates belonging to the Prague church and secondly incomes (various and often irregularly documented) that came from administering the so-called joint property of the Chapter or that came into the treasury from outside (Table 15.3). The first group included contributions from individual groups of Prague clergy to the Chapter, whose size, due dates for payment, and subsequent uses were set out by the relevant articles of the Chapter statutes and foundation charters. These included an income of 160 heavy marks¹ from the estates controlled by Prague's priory. According to the statutes (Statuta, pp. 9–11), the prior was supposed to collect this sum in two instalments on St George's day and St Gall's day, but according to the records in the accounting registers the payments were actually much more frequent. In addition, the common treasury received a share of the income from

Table 15.2 Content of the registers

Signature	f.	Content
zl. 12/18	6	daily portion, apportioning of prelates and canons
zl. 13/21	13	income from mining rights (1359, 1361), daily portions, repairs of liturgical implements
cod. 8/1	58	daily portions (1364–1370), income from Týn court and obediences, sacristan expenditures (1363), interest from obedience Lahovice (1364–1370, 1393–1408), letter by Adam from Nežetice (1408), memorial records
cod. 27/1	80	preliminary interest from obediences and Týn court, apportioning of prelates and canons, record of despoliation of the sacristy (1420), list of Chapter members (after 1420)
cod. 27/2	33	daily portions (1408–1409), income from mining rights, forest management and offerings (1408–1409), incidental expenditures (1408–1409), prior's contributions and their distribution (1411–1417), memorial records
cod. 28/1	60	daily portions, memorial records

Table 15.3 Regular income of the common treasury

Source	Total Sum Per Year	Due Dates for Payments
Priory	180 heavy marks	April 23rd, October 16th
Týn court	204 shocks groschen, and 18 pounds of pepper	c. February 2nd, October 16th
Lenten obedience	c. 108 shocks groschen	Lent
Advent obedience	18 shocks groschen	Advent
Other obedience	6/7 from total income	usually c. April 23rd, October 16th
Annual chantry endowments	?	anniversary of benefactor's death
Silver mines	?	probably once a week
Offerings	?	at every mass

obediences (*oboedientiae*), Chapter estates entrusted into temporary care by the canons. At the beginning of the 14th century, beneficed priests transferred three-quarters of the income from these estates to the common treasury at different points throughout the year (RBM 3, pp. 159–160, no. 395), later the contribution was raised to sixth-sevenths of the income and the due dates were consolidated for St George's day and St Gall's day (Statuta, p. 26). Finally, it received a certain portion of annual chantry endowments, perpetual salaries administered directly

by administrators of the chantries at which the relevant services were celebrated. The size of such salaries depended on the will of the donor. The income collected by the Chapter from Týn court in the Old Town of Prague somewhat deviated from this rule. Between 1364–1418, its annual income fluctuated between 125 and 204 shocks groschen and 36 pounds of pepper due to be paid during on Candlemas and St Gall's day: Týn court was leased to persons outside the Prague church for a fixed sum (Katalog 1, p. 193, no. 693); the accounting registers mention seven renters of Týn court between 1358 and 1418 and four weighers (Maříková, 2014, p. 106–112).

The second group comprised incomes flowing into the common treasury from diverse sources. Particularly important was the income from the silver mines in Kutná Hora. The Chapter received one-tenth of the income from the silver and gold mines in the kingdom as well as the income from mines on its own land near Kutná Hora (Katalog 1, p. 37, no. 93; p. 60, no. 184). This income was administered by one of the canons and divided up among the clergy in approximately week-long intervals (Maříková, 2014, pp. 120–124, 158–159). In addition there were offerings (*offertorium*) and *datio calcaris*, a payment of 50 shocks groschen to be collected on the accession of a newly elected abbot or abbess, a right granted to the Chapter by King Wenceslaus IV in 1388 (Katalog 1, p. 147, no. 525). The Chapter also received the income from the cereal scale (charge for weighing grains) in the Old Town that, with corresponding benefits, had been donated to the Chapter in 1249 by King Wenceslaus I (CDB 4/1, pp. 283–284, no. 173). There was also money from the forests and vineyards owned by the Chapter, and from the Chapter's villages administered by protectors. Finally there were loans, used by the administrators (so-called divisors) to cover any contemporary stoppage of other incomes (Maříková, 2011, pp. 116–121). Aside from a few exceptions (Cod. 8/1, f. 35v, 36v, 50r; Cod. 27/1, f. 54v: loan from priest in Nehvizdy), these loans took place within the Chapter.

Not all the incomes from Chapter's estates actually passed through the common treasury. Individual prelates and canons administered some properties quite independently and for their own benefit, for example, properties belonging to various dignities and prebends. The endowments of minor clergy and the cathedral choir (*mansionarii*), founded in 1343 by Charles IV, were administered in a similar way. Their task, in addition to singing the Marian hours, was to guard the royal tomb and offer masses on behalf of Charles IV's deceased wife and children (Ryba, 1998, pp. 5–59). Additional resources were also dedicated for the building of St Vitus Cathedral. These included the tenth part of the

income from all silver and gold mines in the land (RBM 4, pp. 411–413, no. 1029), a moiety of annual income from benefices of newly-installed prelates and canons (Statuta, pp. 20–21), various fines collected from members of the Prague clergy (Několik statutů, pp. 20, 22) and income from two public collections organized among the clergy of the Prague diocese (Hledíková, 2008, pp. 147–148). The building of individual choir chapels was co-financed by important individuals close to the king (Benešovská, 2005, pp. 19–48). These were also administered separately, as is clear from absence of such expenditures in the accounts of the common treasury and also from the existence of building accounts from 1372 to 1378 (Neuwirth, 1890, pp. 19–369).

The money that, over the course of the entire year, came to the common treasury was subsequently divided up for apportioning, whereby the clergy present at a given service received a certain part of the money received for that day. The primary function of this was to encourage higher participation of clergy in the liturgical life of the Chapter. The size of this so-called portion depended on the standing of the cleric in the hierarchy of the Chapter and in some cases also on the time that he spent in the church (that is, the extent to which he maintained his mandatory residence). The Prague church had three types of apportioning, whose portions were financed from different sources, and each was governed by different rules (Table 15.4).

The registers feature most frequently the so-called daily apportioning. Its portions are described either simply as *portiones*, according to the method of distribution as manual (*portiones manuales*) or according to the origin of the money to be divided up as funeral (*funerales*, that

Table 15.4 Principal expenditures of the common treasury

Type of Expenditure	Source of Finance	Due Dates
Daily apportioning:		
porciones de peccuniis praepositi	priory	29 times per year
porciones funerales	annual chantry endowments	c. 200 times per year
porciones quadragesimales	Lenten obedience	21 times per year
porciones adventuales	Advent obedience	8 times per year
Weekly apportioning:	offering, white bread	every Sunday
Apportioning of prelates and canons (porciones canonicales):	income from Týn court and some obediences	after February 2nd, April 23rd and October 16th

is bequests for a requiem mass), Lenten (*quadregesimales*) or Advent (*adventuales*) (Maříková, 2014, pp. 129–130, 141–145). Everyone who was present on the day of apportioning at the given worship service who was, based on the will of the donor, eligible for apportioning, was entitled to a daily portion. That included the canons, dean and other dignitaries if they also held a prebend,² as well as vicars and, after 1350, chantry priests too (Statuta, pp. 18, 37–38). According to an old custom, canons from Stará Boleslav participated in the daily apportioning on the anniversary of the consecration of the Prague church and on the feast day of St Vitus, receiving portions equal to the canons of the Prague church statutes (Statuta, p. 43). One-quarter of the chantries (*de prov-entibus funeralium*) belonged to the vicars and chantry priests (Statuta, p. 28), whose apportioning was expressed in the registers, if at all, in a lapidary way with the words *deducta quarta*. The minimal attention dedicated in the accounting registers to their apportioning probably reflects the fact that the common treasury was meant primarily to promote the residence of canons, which could not be taken for granted in the same way as for chantry priests and vicars. The remaining three-quarters accrued to prelates and canons, with the dean probably³ taking a double portion and half-beneficed priests sharing one. Between 1408 and 1409, for example, each canon received a portion of about 4–8 groschen, with portions being divided up every two to three days (Cod. 27/2, f. 2r–10v). The source of this apportioning was incomes from bequests for requiem masses, which were divided on the day of the anniversary, six-sevenths from the income of some obediences and a sum of 160 heavy marks, which the prior paid to the Chapter from his rents (Maříková, 2014, pp. 127–146).

The apportioning of offerings (*offertorium*) and white bread was governed by rules that were similar to daily apportioning and it took place once every week (Statuta, p. 27). They came from the offerings that had been collected in the church over the course of the week, with the bread probably being baked especially for this purpose. Offerings were divided up every Sunday and, again, only those clerics who participated in the service on that day were eligible. In the case of the apportioning of white bread, the size of the portion was directly proportionate to the number of days spent in the church in the given week, with a minimum of four days. Whereas canons received 14 white breads, chantry priests (and probably also vicars) received seven, of the same size as the canons (LE 7, pp. 378–380, no. 153).

The portions of the last type of apportioning were the most generously subsidized, with only the following clerics eligible: beneficed canons

(Statuta, p. 18 awards portions only to those dignitaries, excepting the dean, who are at the same time beneficed canons), including half-beneficed priests, also un-beneficed canons, who maintained personal residence and dutifully attended worship services or were devoted to their studies (Statuta, pp. 26–27), and finally also the archbishop's vicar and the master of St Vitus's School, who were all explicitly supposed to receive the same portions as the canons did (Statuta, p. 36). The portions received by the canons came from incomes collected from the lease of Týn court, from silver mines in Kutná Hora (*pecuniae de montibus*) and especially from obediences. In the ideal case, the canons were apportioned three times a year, that is shortly after the Feast of Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St George and St Gall, when incomes from the above-mentioned estates were transferred to the common treasury. Although the statutes say nothing about this, it is clear from the system of apportioning recorded in Cod. 27/1. In reality, however, the number of instances for apportioning during the year was much higher, and that is because there were incomes that were additionally deposited. The rules for this apportioning were especially strict. Canons, whose residence in the church extended for only one or two months prior to any of these dates, received only partial incomes (*participem*) due to the short time (*pro rata temporum*) spent in the church. Others, who spent less than a month in the church, did not receive anything from the incomes divided during that time span (Statuta, pp. 26–27).

An overall picture of the Chapter's financial life emerges only after deciphering all of these above-mentioned components. Its rhythm was determined by regular alternation between different types of apportioning that took place over the course of the entire year: the first day of the new calendar year (that is, 1 January) called for the first of the 29 instances of apportioning involving rents of the Prague priory. Its due dates for the most part coincided with important feast days of the liturgical calendar (Easter, Pentecost, and Holy Trinity), feasts linked with Christ, the Virgin Mary, patrons of the Prague church (St Vitus, St Adalbert, St Wenceslaus) and national saints (St Ludmila, St Prokop). Three days later (4 January), on the occasion of the anniversary of former Prague bishop John IV of Dražice, the participants in the requiem mass received 10 shocks groschen divided among them. Some 200 other chantry masses on behalf of former members of the Chapter and its donors took place in the cathedral over the course of the year. But only a few of them were so generously endowed. The rental payment for the first half a year from Týn court, usually including a certain amount of pepper, was divided up among the residing prelates and canons shortly

after Candlemas (2 February). The first apportioning of the portions from the so-called Lenten obedience, which the clerics received every other day for the duration of the forty-day Lent, took place on Ash Wednesday. Several days after 23 April, another apportioning of the canons took place, this time from the rents from obediences, whose administrators transferred St George's interest to the treasury at this time. Approximately half a year later, residing prelates and canons received the second rental payments from the Chapter's obediences and from Týn court. The first of Advent portions, paid out in the course of Advent from incomes of the so-called Advent obedience, fell on the first Sunday in Advent. Seven other instances of apportioning took place in the cathedral between Christmas and New Year: portions divided up on 24, 25 and 27 December were financed from the estates of Prague priory, portions corresponding with the following four days from an endowment for a total of six different anniversary masses.

Given the large number of dates on which individual portions were distributed, it is unfortunately impossible to offer a complete overview here. Based on the discussion above, however, it is evident that the liturgical and financial lives of the Chapter were in many cases very closely intertwined. The system of dividing the incomes from the Chapter estates was so elaborate that the apportioning was more or less regularly distributed over the course of the whole year. Individual apportioning thus usually took place after the end of the mass, which corresponded with the given endowment. And it was handed out by the administrator of the given property, or his deputy, or the so-called divisors.

Divisors were the individuals, who administered the common treasury and oversaw individual apportioning, including calculating the size of each portion. They were two officers, elected from among the canons in regular chapters (Maříková, 2014, pp. 91–95). Given the large degree of decentralization in the administration of the Chapter estates (Maříková, 2011, pp. 101–123), however, practically all clerics in the church, both prelates and their vicars and individual chantry priests, came regularly into contact with its finances. Each one of them was obliged – in keeping with the statutes and donation charters – dutifully to administer the entrusted estates, to transfer a certain portion of their rents to the treasury on the agreed-upon dates, and in some cases even to carry out its physical division among the clergy present. In that sense, dealing with finances was an integral part of the life of the Chapter, which made tremendous demands both on the administrator of the treasury and on all other members of the church. It was important for the prosperity of

the Chapter that its members had not only the corresponding ordination, but also were capable managers and, in the case of the divisors, also accountants.

15.2 The account-keeping of the registers

The way the accounting registers of the Prague Chapter were kept is, therefore, even more surprising. This is especially so given the fact that this was an important religious institution. Aside from the close interconnectedness of the Chapter with the first cathedral in the kingdom and with central offices of the ecclesiastical administration of the Prague diocese, we must also mention the activities of its individual members in different public functions (Hledíková, 1976, pp. 244–277; Budský, 2006, pp. 53–86) and at the Prague university (Budský, 2009, pp. 21–61). The Chapter was also extremely wealthy. Although the properties of the Prague Chapter are still awaiting a full analysis (see Tomek, 1892–1893, vol. 1, pp. 76–79, 384–397; vol. 2, pp. 82–91; vol. 3, pp. 50–71), we can use the number of patronage rights that they held as a relative marker allowing us to establish the rough share of Prague Chapter's participation in land ownership in pre-Hussite Bohemia. According to this criterion, the Prague Chapter was – along with Prague's Johannites – among the most important ecclesiastical institutions in the land, immediately after the archbishopric of Prague and the families of lords from Rožmberk, Vartenberk and Dubá (Boháč, 1984, p. 21). The Chapter's members had – compared with the regular population – above average education⁴ and some of them had also experienced working in the office of the archbishop or even the pope. Locally, the canons were active in the office of the general vicar, who also directed the archbishop's office (Hledíková, 1971, pp. 95, 117–136), but also in the positions of the chancellor, notary or prot-honotary (Hledíková, 2008, pp. 134–137, 209–210, 222–224). Within the papal curia, they held the offices of the secretary, scribe, abbreviator, corrector, papal chaplain, auditor or nuncio (Budský, 2006, pp. 57–59, 62; Hledíková, 2010, pp. 446–448). In contrast to the contemporary accounting methods used by the treasurer of the Prague archbishopric and burgrave of Nové Hradý domain (Chaloupecký, 1912, pp. 5–17; Šusta, 1909, pp. 5–24), the administrators of the common treasury did not record their incomes and expenditures separately, did not put different kinds of incomes and expenditures under separate rubrics⁵ and did not calculate a final balance. These are, then, a kind of accounting diary, and record income and expenditures sequentially from different

categories of Chapter property, often without these even being made visually distinct in any way.⁶

The records mention the calculations themselves only exceptionally, with sums received and sums spent such as gradual additions of sums received⁷ or paid⁸ or their divisions into portions.⁹ In fact, the information given about the sums collected and about the number and size of divided-up portions is often contradictory. An independent calculation of the sums recorded in Cod. 27/2, for instance, shows that the collected sum did not equal the sums that were subsequently spent on the portions for any of the time periods (the discrepancies occurred in both directions). But the flawless calculation of the fourth part (*pro quarta, deducta quarta*) that belonged to the minor clergy of the church shows convincingly that these were not errors in calculation, but rather a deliberate rounding of figures. This approach was, no doubt, motivated by the impossibility of dividing the given sum among the clergy present. Given the fact that a similar apportioning took place several times a week, it was not even necessary. It is possible that the divisors deliberately rounded the sum and stored the surplus in the common treasury, so that they could use it at a later date, if necessary, to add to the sum that was to be divided. The practice of rounding up a given sum (to the next several groschen), may also have been supposed to simplify the calculations involved and similar methods have been discovered in the case of other contemporary accounts (Chaloupecký, 1912, p. 8; Šusta, 1909, p. 10; Suchý, 2003, p. 8).

The only progressive element in the accounting registers of the Prague Chapter is the mention of “partial sums” (*summa*) at the end of individual folios, which appears in the records from the years 1393–1396 (Cod. 28/1, f. 1r–24v). The size of the recorded sums, anywhere between several groschen to about 2.5 shocks groschen, makes it impossible that this could be the sum total of collected income. Most likely, the numbers show how much money was, after distributing portions among all the participants in the worship service, put into the common treasury. Each of these sums is related only to the folio in which it is recorded, and the sums from the individual folios are not added up together. However, approximately every year, there is a record of a “sum total” (*summa summarum*),¹⁰ which summarizes the active balance for the entire preceding period.

However, it is necessary to say that this “primitive” kind of Chapter accounting was probably not the result of ignorance of more advanced accounting techniques. Two single accounts from 1404 and 1405

support this hypothesis; they were put together by the canons sent to conduct negotiations in Kutná Hora. They first enumerated the financial sums that were paid out to them by the sacristan, and then recorded – in a very detailed manner – the expenditures for each day of the journey, including partial balances. The total account of the costs follows at the end (Čelakovský, 1916, pp. 117–124). Rather the accounting policy adopted was dictated by the specific demands of the Chapter management. These accounting registers were not set up to show the profit from different rents of the Prague church or the final accounting balance for the Chapter's dean. Indeed, it is an open question whether anything like that was ever a custom in the Prague Chapter. The statute only very generally mentions that the prior is supposed to take care of the Chapter property (*Statuta*, pp. 7–8). However, in his absence, this task would undoubtedly fall to the dean. We can presume some sort of accounting audit, at least on the occasion of the appointment of new divisors. But the extant sources are silent on the subject. Probably their only function was to record the daily incomes and expenditures of the common treasury. The primary purpose of this part of the Chapter management was not to maximize the incomes from the properties administered but rather to encourage higher participation of the canons in the liturgical life of the Prague church and the solidarity among the clergy as a whole. The external form of the extant accounting documents was fully subordinated to this function (Maříková, 2014, pp. 79–84).

Equally surprising is the finding that both the content of the individual registers and the formal aspect and information value of the records often changed radically depending on the identity of the scribe. In putting together the accounting records, the administrators of the common treasury did not follow any binding rules, but approached it based on their own education and experience. In this way, each of the six extant exemplars has its own distinctly particular content and way of recording, which makes each an unmistakable original. Importantly, this fact not only influences the evidential value of the recorded data (Table 15.5), but also makes the identification of the origin and designation of individual entries difficult, to say nothing about the challenges of potentially editing the material. Although there is naturally some repetition in the different types of incomes and expenditures covered by the registers in the course of 60 years, the way of recording changes to such an extent that every individual piece is, thanks to the particular approach of its scribe, completely unique.

Table 15.5 Evidentiary value of accounting registers

Signature	Time Span	Types of Data
zl. 12/18	1358	names of persons on whose behalf annual masses were celebrated; sums designated for candles and offerings; usually a more precise identification of the source of money (name of the payer, altar or estate)
zl. 13/21	1364	the same
cod. 8/1	1364–1371	the same
cod. 27/1	1396–1418	size and number of canonical portions, names of canons and their order in the choir
cod. 27/2	1408–1409	size and number of the daily portions that were distributed
	1411–1417	size of the portions financed from the prior's contribution
cod. 28/1	1393–1399	size of daily portions, sometimes a more precise identification of the source of the money or names of persons on whose behalf annual masses were celebrated
	1393–1398	names of the canons who were absent

15.3 Possibilities and pitfalls of editing

The brief account above should have illustrated clearly the value of this source and the evidence that it contains. We cannot, therefore, doubt that it would be useful for the academic community to have access to an edition of this material. The question remains, however, how to produce an edition that would be well arranged and that would, at the same time, offer the user the maximum amount of the information contained in the original. Given the changing character of the individual entries, neither of the usual approaches – transliteration or tabulation – seems ideal.

Transcription of the text (transliteration) with footnotes, as adopted by most published Czech editions of accounting material, might make all the information contained in the original available, making it possible to analyse the different work styles of the different scribes. But given the elliptical way of keeping the registers, such an edition would require an extensive note apparatus that would approximately double the extent of the text. Furthermore, any work with the data would be very complicated and drawn-out. The problem could, at least in part, be solved by adding other registers (of names, locations, index),¹¹ but even in that case the result probably would not be ideal and the usability of

such an edition would not be commensurate with the effort expended in producing it.

It would therefore be more practical, from the point of view of potential users, to present repeated entries in the form of well-arranged tables, although Czech historians have used this method of editorial work only occasionally, in the case of editions of books of town collections. The advantage of this approach is that it provides an easy and quick guide to the records. Each of the received or spent sums could, if tabulated, be clearly identified. That means it could be identified both chronologically and in terms of its place in the Chapter's management. Presenting all related operations in a single table, in their chronological order, would also obviate the need for a lengthy search for individual details in the text.

This approach is, unfortunately, made more difficult by the, rather complicated, system of different types of apportioning described above, but also by the changeable way of keeping the registers and the difficulty in identifying some of the payments. In some cases it would be relatively easy to enter the data for individual years into one, well-arranged, table (for example incomes collected twice a year from Týn court and some other obediences). In other cases, however, it would be necessary – for the sake of easier comprehension – to divide up the data into several independent units. This holds true especially for the so-called daily portions, where the amount and changeability of the recorded data makes it impossible to create only one summary table for the entire period.

Moreover, this approach, unfortunately, cannot be applied to all the data recorded in the registers. Aside from the way in which they were kept and from the records that are more memorial in nature, this also holds true for the subjectively stylized records¹² and, for example, data about the order of the canons in the choir or the sizes of reduced portions, as well as for the incomes and expenditures that occurred on an irregular basis. The combination of both approaches appears, therefore, to be ideal.¹³ Whereas tables can be published along with a study that analyses the management of the common Chapter treasury, textual transcription can be made accessible via an on-line edition.

15.4 Conclusion

The collection of accounting registers of the Prague Chapter discussed here is, in many respects, completely unique for the Czech milieu. It is not only the number of extant exemplars, which does not have an equal for the period under study in the Czech Republic. The time span

of the material, covering the last 60 years before the Hussite wars, is also impressive, as is the diversity of its content, which offers to the patient researcher a unique opportunity to study the role of finance in the life of the members of the first church in the kingdom. These facts, however, make this source a tough nut to crack and its editing will present potential editors with a difficult challenge.

Notes

This study is an abbreviated version of the author's PhD thesis (Maříková, 2014), supported by the Grant agency of the Charles University. It has been translated by Marcela K. Perett.

1. The heavy mark was a common unit of exchange containing 64 groschen, as opposed to the light mark = 56 groschen and mining mark = 48 groschen.
2. From 1367, each prelate of the chapter had one canon benefice (Hledíková, 1972, p. 13).
3. Although the statutes do not mention anything like that, we can presume that the mechanism of everyday apportioning was the same as apportioning for canons (see below).
4. The presumed education of the chapter's divisors was, however, focused in an entirely different direction from that involved in keeping such specialized documents as the accounts.
5. Separating some items from the main records that are kept chronologically, which was implemented in Cod. 27/2 by the chapter's divisors John of Malešice and John Náz. Whereas the first third of the book contains records about daily apportioning (Cod. 27/2, f. 5r–10v), introduced by apportioning of the Lenten portions (f. 2r), the second part features different items arranged in separate rubrics: one-time expenses from the common treasury (f. 23rv), income from Týn court (f. 25r), silver mines (f. 29r) and chapter forests (f. 32v), records about contributions for capes (f. 31v–32r), and apportioning with offerings collected on the feast days of St Vitus, the Assumption of Virgin Mary and St Wenceslaus (f. 33v). The fact that all the dated sections come from 1408 and the beginning of 1409 suggests that the layout of the register was originally supposed to follow this arrangement. However, this original intention was abandoned as early as the beginning of 1411, when all the items – with the exception of the prior's salary – benefitting the Chapter (f. 13r–20v) entirely disappear from the book.
6. In Cod. 8/1 and 27/1, the titles regularly introduce periods demarcated by the feast days of the Purification of the Virgin Mary, St George and St Gall, which were the designated days for individual apportioning of the canons. The scribes of Cod. 8/1 and 27/2, in contrast, usually found it to be entirely sufficient to mark the year at the beginning of every new calendar year.
7. Zlomky (hereinafter zl.) 12/18, f. 1r, 5r; zl. 13/21, f. 3r; Cod. 8/1, f. 50r, 52r, 56v, 58r; Cod. 27/1, f. 13r, 22r, 29r, 36r, 44r, 49v, 51v, 59rv, 65r; Cod. 27/2, f. 32v.
8. Zl. 12/18, f. 1v, 6v; zl. 13/21, f. 7r (subtraction); Cod. 27/1, f. 48r.

9. Zl. 12/18, f. 1v, 5r; zl. 13/21, f. 1rv; Cod. 8/1, f. 42rv, 57v; Cod. 28/1, f. 37r, 39rv, 40r, 41rv, 43v, 45r, 48r.
10. Cod. 28/1, f. 7v (before 20th of September 1394), 16r (30th of September 1395), 21v (25th of March 1396). The six-month interval of the last balance sheet probably has something to do with the fact that the register's scribe changed during that time.
11. Cod. 27/1 was made accessible using this method, without an apparatus (Maříková, 2007, pp. 314–442). The plan to publish the accompanying tables was, given the limited technical capabilities of the publisher, eventually abandoned.
12. Zl. 12/18, f. 1r; zl. 13/21, f. 9r; Cod. 8/1, f. 1r; Cod. 28/1, f. 42v, 60r; Cod. 27/2, f. 2r, 5rv, 8r, 9r, 10v, 23rv, 25r, 29r, 31v, 32rv; Cod. 27/1, f. 66v.
13. This approach is also used in author's PhD thesis (Maříková, 2014, pp. i–cc (transcription), cci–ccxli (indexes) and 42 tables).

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